IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE

OF BOMBAY AT PORVORIM, GOA

P.I.L. Writ Petition No. /2025

The Goa Foundation ….Petitioner

V/s

State of Goa & Ors …Respondents

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PLACE: PORVORIM, GOA

DATE: 21.08.2025

ADVOCATE FOR THE PETITIONER

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE

OF BOMBAY AT PORVORIM, GOA

P.I.L. Writ Petition No. /2025

The Goa Foundation ….Petitioner

V/s

State of Goa & Ors. …Respondents

SYNOPSIS AND CHRONOLOGY OF DATES AND EVENTS

This public interest litigation seeks the urgent intervention of the Hon'ble Court to review the propriety of permissions, approvals and work orders issued for the expansion / upgradation of the Aranyak Campsite, located within the Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park at Collem, Goa. The primary cause of action, *inter alia*, arises from a Judgment of the Bombay High Court dt. 24.07.2023, which directed the State Government to notify the sanctuary and adjacent sanctuaries as a Tiger Reserve, following a recommendation from the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The land designated for the resort lies entirely within the

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core area of the proposed Tiger Reserve, an ecologically sensitive region known for its rich biodiversity, including tigers, sloth bears, leopards, pangolins, vipers and over 300 unique plant species. Despite the absence of any stay on the High Court's directions and the pendency of proceedings seeking Contempt action to be initiated against the State for non-compliance, state authorities such as the Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd. (GFDCL), have proceeded to issue approvals and work orders for the Eco Camp project, being carried out by a private company, M/s. Unifab Infra Projects Pvt Ltd. The proposed project is also in flagrant violation of statutory provisions, such as Section 29 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, which prohibits the destruction or diversion of wildlife habitat within a sanctuary except for the improvement / benefit of the wildlife therein, and the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, which requires prior approval from the Central Government for any diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. The clearances issued for the project are impugned in this petition, and the project's outlay of nearly Rs. 2.50 crores for structures of permanent nature and a solar powered electric fence to exclude wildlife from the resort area further highlights the prioritization of commercial interests over conservation imperatives. The Eco Camp project's continuation would cause irreversible ecological damage to one of Goa's most sensitive wildlife habitats and is designed to present the Court with a *fait accompli*, in the teeth of various statutes and the judgement of this court dt. 24.07.2023. Hence this PIL.

LIST OF DATES AND EVENTS

Sr. No.	Date	Particulars of events or documents	Annexure and Page No
1.	2020	PIL filed by the present Petitioner seeking notification of a Tiger Reserve, in view of the killing of 4 tigers in Mhadei wildlife sanctuary	
2.	28.06.2023	During the pendency of the abovementioned PIL (PILWP/15/2022) a Detailed Project Report for Development of Eco-Camps at Collem, South Goa, is submitted by Darashaw & Co. Pvt. Ltd.	**Ann. 6** **Pg. No. 152 - 209**
3.	24.07.2023	Hon'ble High Court by its detailed judgement delivers a slew of directions to the State Government, including a direction to notify the Tiger Reserve.	**Ann. 4** **Pg. No. 54 - 147**
4.	30.09.2023	Site Inspection conducted and Report for Development of Eco- Camps at Aranyak Campsite – South Goa, at Collem, Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park, is issued by Dy. Conservator of Forest (Wildlife & Eco - Tourism,	**Ann. 8** **Pg. No. 212 - 223**

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		North)	
5.	9.11.2023	Forest Department issues an order designating GFDCL as nodal agency for conducting eco-tourism in protected areas and Government forests.	
6.	20.11.2023	State Board of Wildlife recommended the project without having any EIA or carrying capacity study, as required.	**Ann. 10 Colly Pg. No. 232**
7.	December, 2023	The State Government approved the project.	**Ann. 10 Colly Pg. No. 233**
8.	24.01.2024	National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) issues a letter containing its observations and recommendations relating to the project proposal, contradicting its own recommendation that the Area is to be declared a Tiger Reserve.	**Ann. 11 Colly Pg. No. 234 - 237**
9.	30.01.2024	Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife grants NOC for use of forest land for development of Eco – Camps at Collem, Goa.	**Ann. 12 Pg. No. 238 - 243**

10.	13.02.2024	The decision of the Standing Committee is conveyed by the Child Wildlife Warden to the Principal Secretary of Goa Government along with information that permit may be required under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA), now renamed the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam Act.	**Ann. 13** **Pg. No. 244**
11.	20.02.2024	GFDCL replies clarifying that the constructions forming a part of the project were not permanent in nature. This is patently false.	**Ann. 14** **Pg. No. 245 – 246**
12.	22.07.2024	Permit issued by Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Goa, for development of Eco-Camp at Collem, South Goa.	**Ann. 19** **Pg. No. 270 - 271**
13.	04.02.2025	Vide Administrative Order State Government grants approval to GFDCL to operate & maintain ecotourism assets situated at Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park.	**Ann. 21** **Pg. No. 274 - 275**

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14.	26.06.2025	Work Order issued to M/s Unifab Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd. by GFDCL.	**Ann. 22 Colly Pg. No. 276 - 283**
15.	06.08.2025	Agreement executed between GFDCL and M/s Unifab Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd. for erection and completion of the said project.	**Ann. 22 Colly Pg. No. 284 - 288**
16.	06.08.2025	Petitioners writes to GFDCL objecting to the construction of project within Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary	**Ann. 25 Pg. No. 300**
17.	21.08.2025	PIL Writ Petition filed	

PLACE: PORVORIM, GOA

DATE: 21.08.2025 ADVOCATE FOR THE PETITIONER

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE OF BOMBAY AT PORVORIM, GOA

P.I.L. Writ Petition No. /2025

The Goa Foundation ….Petitioner

V/s

State of Goa & Ors. …Respondents

QUESTIONS FOR DETERMINATION AND LIST OF ACTS & AUTHORITIES

1. Whether the approvals/NOCs granted for a Eco – Tourism Camp in the core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve could have been issued without reference to and in contravention of the directions issued by this Hon'ble Court in its judgment dated 24.07.2023?

2. Whether the approvals/NOCs granted for a Eco – Tourism Camp in the core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve are permissible and proper in terms of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972?

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3. Whether the impugned project could be allowed without prior approval under the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980?

LIST OF ACTS & AUTHORITIES

- The Constitution of India, 1950
- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
- The Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
- Guidelines on Sustainable Eco – Tourism in Forest & Wildlife Areas 2021

PLACE: PORVORIM, GOA

DATE: 21.08.2025 ADVOCATE FOR THE PETITIONER

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE OF BOMBAY AT PORVORIM, GOA

P.I.L. Writ Petition No. /2025

IN THE MATTER OF ARTICLES 21, 14, 48-A, 51-A(g) & 226 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA AND RULE 4(e) OF THE BOMBAY HIGH COURT PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATION RULES, 2010;

AND

IN THE MATTER OF SECTION 29 AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT GOVERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TIGER RESERVE;

AND

IN THE MATTER OF EXTENSION/ UPGRADATION OF A ECO CAMP AND ITS CONSTRUCTION IN THE

PROPOSED CORE ZONE OF THE TIGER RESERVE IN GOA DESPITE A JUDGMENT AND SPECIFIC DIRECTIONS OF THIS HON'BLE COURT.

THE GOA FOUNDATION
through its Secretary, Dr. Claude Alvares,
Age 77 years, Having Regd. Office at
Room No 7, Above Mapusa Clinic,
Mapusa, Goa 403507
PAN No. AAAAG0249C,
Income: Rs 15 - 26,00,000/- per annum (approx.),
Registration No. - 23/Goa/86,
Email id: goafoundation@gmail.com

……**PETITIONER**

v/s

1. **THE STATE OF GOA,**
   through its Chief Secretary,
   Secretariat, Porvorim, Goa - 403521.

2. **FOREST DEPARTMENT OF GOA,**
   through its Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,
   Van Bhavan, Altinho, Panaji, Goa - 403001.

3. **GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD.,** through its Managing Director,
   Junta House 3rd Floor,

Panaji Tiswadi, Goa-403001.

4. **THE CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN,**
   Van Bhavan, Altinho, Panaji, Goa-403001.

5. **NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY,**
   B-1 Wing, 7th Floor,
   Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan,
   CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003.

6. **NATIONAL BOARD OF WILDLIFE,**
   through its Member Secretary,
   Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
   Jorbagh Road, New Delhi – 110003.

7. **GOA STATE WILDLIFE ADVISORY BOARD,**
   through its Member Secretary,
   Van Bhavan, Altinho, Panaji, Goa - 403501

8. **M/S UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED,**
   through its Director,
   H.No. 44/47, Nuwa Colony,
   Naguem, Valpoi, Sattari, Goa - 403505.

….**RESPONDENTS**

(Above addresses are registered addresses of parties)

To,
The Hon'ble Chief Justice
and His Companion Judges,
Bombay High Court at Porvorim, Goa

THIS HUMBLE PETITION OF THE PETITIONER MOST RESPECTFULLY SHOWS AS UNDER

PARTICULARS OF THE CAUSE AGAINST WHICH THIS PIL IS FILED

1. This PIL Writ Petition is being filed to challenge the collective recommendations, permits and work orders issued by the various respondent statutory bodies, departments, corporates and officers for the erection of a wholly undesirable and anti-wildlife eco camps styled as a "eco-tourism facility", proposed in Survey No. 38/1 of Collem village in Dharbandora Taluka, South Goa at the Aranyak Campsite, by usurping 2.096 ha. (20,960 sq. mts.) of forest land from the Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park.

2. In a detailed Judgment dt. 24.07.2023 in PIL W.P. No.15/2022 filed by this Petitioner, this Hon'ble High Court has directed the State Government to notify a Tiger Reserve comprising the 4 contiguous wildlife sanctuaries and national park located on Goa's eastern borders. Respondents Nos.1, 2, 4, 5 and 7 were parties to the said petition and

judgment. The proposed site for the eco camps falls within the proposed core area of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve Core zones of tiger sanctuaries are inviolate, while buffer zones are permitted for original resident populations and permissible activity. The State Government has appealed the said Judgment dt. 24.07.2023 before the Hon'ble Apex Court. Though the Apex Court has issued notice on 25.09.2023, it has not stayed either the judgment or the directions issued by this Hon'ble Court which continue to rule the field. The Order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dt. 25.09.2023 is enclosed as **Annexure 1.**

3. There is also an M.C.A. 23/2024 filed by the Petitioner in P.I.L. W.P. 15/2022, where the Petitioner has sought for contempt proceedings to be initiated against the State Govt. on account of the failure of the State to notify the Tiger Reserve within the 3 months' time stipulated by the Judgement dt. 24.07.2023, which M.C.A. is pending in this Hon'ble Court. A second Contempt Petition C.P. 2166/2024 [F] had been filed by the Petitioner for the failure of the Govt. in not settling the claims of persons affected by the sanctuary notification despite the passage of one year, as directed in the Tiger Reserve judgement. This Hon'ble Court was pleased to dispose of the said C.P. by granting an extension of time of 9 months sought by the State Government, in terms of its Order dt. 17.10.2024. In other words, the settlement process should have been completed by 17.07.2025. However, till date little to nothing has been done by the State Government with respect these Orders

thereby prima facie displaying the careless attitude of the State Government besides the blatant disregard to this Hon'ble Court and the law. The Orders in this regard dt. 17.10.2024 are enclosed as **Annexure 1-A Colly.**

4. In view of the above factual situation, all the impugned approvals and work order for the eco camp in question are in gross contempt of this Hon'ble Court and contrary to its directions, and any actions that are proposed to be taken as consequences of these approvals/orders are required to be stayed as long as this Hon'ble Court's judgment and directions rule the field.

5. The Petitioner also submits that the permit of the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) and the approval of the State Government for the construction of the eco camps directly violates Section 29 of the Wildlife Protection Act besides militating against the interests of wildlife and the wildlife habitat. The project does not have any prior approval under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980. The most egregious aspect of the impugned eco camp is the decision to approve an electric fence to keep the wildlife out of the area of the eco camp, in the interests of the safety of the well-heeled customers.

6. A Work Order has been issued in June 2025 by the Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd., ('GFDCL', the Resp. No. 3) to the Resp. No. 8 (M/s Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited), for construction of 10 nos. of MS Prefab Hut Structures at the Aranyak Campsite. M/s Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited is a company engaged with

Manufacturing [*Sub-classified into Construction of building*] and is primarily engaged in the Assembly and erection of prefabricated constructions at the site. The GFDCL and M/s Unifab Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd. have no rights whatsoever to carry on any business in the sanctuary under the provisions of the Act, and all are interlopers. Hence, this PIL is filed solely in the interests of wildlife conservation and invoking the duties devolving on Petitioners under Articles 48-A and 51-A (g) of the Constitution of India.

PARTICULARS OF THE PETITIONER

7. The Petitioner is an environment NGO based in Goa who has approached both, this Hon'ble Court and the Hon'ble Supreme Court, time and again over the past three decades, in public interest, for enforcement of the provisions of environment, wildlife, forest, coastal regulation, land use, pollution and mining laws. Specifically, this Petitioner has moved this Hon'ble Court and Supreme Court in several petitions dealing with the conservation of the wildlife sanctuaries of Goa, including its sole National Park. All its members are citizens of India. The average annual income of the Petitioner organization is between Rs. 15 to Rs. 26 lakh. The Petitioner states that there is no civil, criminal or revenue litigation involving the Petitioner organization which has or could have a legal nexus with the issue involved in this PIL. The Registration certificate and resolution of the Petitioner organisation are herein marked and annexed to the petition as **Annexure 2 Colly.** An

undertaking that the Petitioner will disclose the source of information leading to the filing of the PIL is filed by the Petitioner and is marked and annexed at **Annexure 2-A.**

PARTICULARS OF THE RESPONDENTS

8. The Resp. No. 1 is the State of Goa, and is required to approve any permit issued under Section 29 of the Act. Resp. No. 2 is the Forest Department of the State Government. Resp. No. 3 is a body corporate of the State of Goa, tasked with conservation and sustainable management of its forests. Resp. No. 4 is the sole authority under the Wildlife Act to oversee the conservation of wildlife, biodiversity and habitat of a wildlife sanctuary and to issue permits under Section 29 for activity that will not damage the sanctuary but must always be in the interests of wildlife and wildlife habitat. Resp. No. 5 is the National Tiger Conservation Authority. Resp. Nos. 6 and 7 are the statutory bodies that advise the Central and State Governments on wildlife management. Resp. No. 8 is a manufacturing company that has been issued the contract to construct 10 nos. prefab MS hut structures at the campsite.

DECLARATION OF THE PETITIONER

9. The Petitioner states that this petition is filed by way of public interest. The Petitioner does not have any personal interest in the matter. Reliefs claimed are in public interest.

10. The Petitioner states that the entire litigation costs and other charges are being borne by the Petitioners.

11. The Petitioner states that adequate research has been conducted in the matter raised through the petition and all relevant material has been annexed to the petition. Additional information may be added, if necessary, at a later stage.

12. The Petitioner states that to the best of their knowledge and research the issues raised in the petition were not dealt with or decided and that a similar or identical petition was not filed earlier by the Petitioner on the same matter either in this Hon'ble Court or in the Supreme Court of India.

13. The Petitioner states that this Hon'ble Court has jurisdiction to hear and decide this matter.

14. The Petitioner states that there is no civil, criminal or revenue litigation involving the Petitioner organization which has or could have a legal nexus with the issue involved in this PIL.

15. The Petitioner has understood that in the course of hearing of this petition, the Court may require any security to be furnished towards costs or any other charges and the Petitioner shall comply with such charges.

FACTS CONSTITUTING THE CAUSE

16. As per the Detailed Project Report (DPR), the project in question is an eco-tourism project, being promoted under the label of "eco-camps" with a view to develop the original Aranyak Campsite at Collem to "global standards", purportedly "to facilitate long term growth and development of hinterland tourism industry in a sustainable manner and create a vehicle to ensure robust operation and maintenance with effective publicity and promotional activities." The project ostensibly also looks at the development as a contributor to employment generation for the local population. The project however has nothing to do with either wildlife or wildlife conservation, or for the improvement and better management of wildlife.

17. The project has an initial approved expenditure of approx. Rs. 2.5 crores and is located in Sy. No. 38/1 of Collem village in South Goa on forest land admeasuring 2.096 ha. (20,960 sq. mts.) of the Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park. The Collem village falls within the proposed core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve. This is clear from the map prepared by the Forest Department which was part of the record of PIL WP No. 15/2022. Copy of the map is hereto annexed as **Annexure 3**. Under the Tiger Conservation Plan, all core areas are to be considered "inviolate", and any settlement must be shifted to the buffer areas or out of the reserve.

Project contrary to judgment and directions of this Hon'ble Court

18. The PIL WP for a Tiger Reserve in Goa was filed by this Petitioner in 2020 in the wake of 4 tigers being poisoned by a villager apparently due to their movement in the village settlement area. The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) dispatched a team immediately and thereafter filed a report recommending the notification of the sanctuary as a Tiger Reserve as there was evidence of tigers in the area. The Hon'ble High Court delivered its judgment in the matter on 24.07.2023. A copy of the judgment is enclosed at **Annexure 4**. The direction given in the judgment to the State Government to declare a Tiger Reserve is at para 159 (i-iii), which is reproduced below:

i) We direct the State Government to notify the Mhadei WLS and other areas referred to in NTCA's communications (and the plans prepared by the Goa Forest Department Officials) as a tiger reserve under Section 38-V (1) of the WLPA within three months from today;

ii) We direct the State Government to take all steps to prepare a tiger conservation plan as contemplated by Section 38-V (3) of the WLPA and to forward the same to the NTCA within three months from notifying the Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve;

iii) *We direct the NTCA to render full assistance to the State Government for completing the above process and after that to expeditiously process the State Government's Tiger Conservation Plan and take a decision thereon within three months of receiving the tiger conservation plan from the State Government.*

19. The Petitioner states that the present Forest Minister, Shri. Vishwajit Rane, and the Chairperson of the Goa Forest Development Corporation, Dr. Deviya Rane have been vehemently opposed to the implementation of the directions of this Hon'ble Court relating to the Tiger Reserve. Some media reports post the judgment on the Tiger Reserve containing their comments are at **Annexure 5 Colly**.

20. Even while the Tiger Reserve petition P.I.L. W.P. 15/2022 was pending before the Division Bench of this Hon'ble Court, the Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd. (GFDCL), a body corporate of the Government of Goa, commenced procedures to establish an expanded and upgraded eco-tourism project for developing the Aranyak campsite in the Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park, for which it hired Darashaw and Co. Pvt Ltd for a Detailed Project Report (DPR). That report was submitted in June 2023, a month prior to the tiger judgment. A copy of the DPR is at **Annexure 6**. These facts disclose the first legal impropriety of this project: that the consultant was hired by the GFDCL which had no business to plan any projects in

any wildlife sanctuary. The exclusive jurisdiction under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, (WLPA) for sanctuary management lies with the Chief Wildlife Warden. Only the Chief Wildlife Warden is authorised, and for the sole purpose of the welfare of the wildlife, to carry out or cause to be carried out any activity within the sanctuary/national park.

21. The original concept for the project was, in fact, prepared by the GFDCL which is chaired by the Sattari MLA, Dr. Deviya Rane (the spouse of the Forest Minister of the Goa Government, Shri. Vishwajit Rane). The Note (undated) prepared by the General Manager of the GFDCL is at **Annexure 7**. The Note emphasises the upgrading/extending of the eco campsite which prima facie seems to be a profit-making unit by providing accommodation facilities and recreation for tourist who visit the neighbouring tourist attractions such as Dudhsagar waterfalls, Mahadev Temple at Tambdi Surla, Dudhsagar Plantations, Atreya Vedic & Spice Plantation – Mollem, and the Devils canyon (a picturesque river gorge near Collem). The justification Note however fails to mention anything about either wildlife, tigers, Tiger Reserve or the established tiger corridor. The Note discloses no details about how the activity conforms with the aims and objectives of the National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031) or the Tiger Conservation Plan. This is important to keep in mind considering that the site is squarely within the Bhagwan

Mahavir National Park and falls within the core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve.

22. The Petitioner states that the initial site inspection for the impugned project was conducted in fact on 30th September 2023, a month after the tiger judgment. Thus, the initiative to establish a project which would undermine the judgment and present the court with a fait accompli received momentum very clearly after the judgment. The Site inspection report records that the project would involve State as well as private funds, the cost of which was now pegged at Rs. 2.50 crore. About the wildlife of the area, the inspection report itself records:

"*5. As movement of wild animals like Gaur, Sloth Bear, Tiger etc are recorded at site and in nearby areas, adequate measures are to be taken while developing the project site, assets and project activities considering the safety of wild animals and Visitors. As mentioned in the Project Proposal, Solar fencing shall be erected around the Project site as per established norms without obstructing free movement of wild animals.*

6. As snakes and other reptiles are also recorded in the surrounding areas, eco-camps and common facilities are to be designed accordingly. Free movement of visitors shall not be allowed. Venturing out into surrounding forest areas except authorized routes must be not allowed. The proposed activities like Bird Walk, Treks are to be done strictly under the supervision of the authorized Nature Guides. Further

GFDC/UA shall only undertake such Treks, Bird Walks, Safaris etc. in routes identified by the Department in a prescribed manner."

A copy of the site inspection report dated 30.09.2023 is enclosed at **Annexure 8**.

23. It is important to emphasize here again that any decisions in connection with protected areas can only be taken, under the legal provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, by the Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the sanctuary who is exclusively empowered for the same. The decisions of the CWLW will run the gauntlet of Section 29 of the WLPA, and can only be for the improvement and better management of wildlife. The GFDCL is a body corporate under the Companies Act. Like any other person, it has no jurisdiction to enter a protected area or to plan activities in a protected area for any purpose except under a permit of the CWLW which, as submitted, must conform to Section 29. It was only on 09.11.2023 that the Forest Department issued a belated, unsustainable memorandum designating the GFDCL as a nodal agency for conducting eco-tourism in protected areas and government forests. The Work Order, in the humble submission of the Petitioner, has been issued without jurisdiction and is in conflict with the provisions of the WLPA. It is therefore liable to be quashed and set aside.

24. Thereafter, the approvals relating to the project have come with amazing speed within the space of a few months due to the obvious influence and clout of the Forest Minister. The State Board of Wildlife recommended the project at its

meeting held on 20th November 2023, without having any EIA or carrying capacity study in front of it (as required) and on the unexamined assurance that the eco camp would comprise "temporary structures." A copy of the minutes of the SBWL meeting held on 20.11.2023 is at **Annexure 9**. It confirms the proposal emanated not from the CWLW, but from the GFDCL. Thereafter, the forest department sought approval of the State Government vide Note dated 15.12.2023. The State Government approved the project thereafter in the same month. These two letters are enclosed at **Annexure 10 Colly**. None of the documentation indicates that the directions issued by this Hon'ble Court on the Tiger Reserve were made available at the SBWL meeting.

25. On 24.01.2024, the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) issued a letter containing its observations and recommendations relating to the project proposal, and for the project, contradicting its own recommendation that the Area be declared a Tiger Reserve. The NTCA issued a recommendation under Section 38O(1)(g) of the WLPA which deals with Tiger Reserves. A copy of the NTCA recommendation is at **Annexure 11**. Either the NTCA did not know that the impugned project was in the proposed core zone of the Tiger Reserve or in granting an NOC contrary to its own affirmed stand on the Tiger Reserve (reflected in the tiger judgment), simply did not apply its mind and succumbed to political influence. In either event, the NOC granted is contrary to the NTCA's mandate, and the provisions dealing with Tiger Reserves in the Wildlife

Protection Act, 1972, and is liable to be quashed and set aside. It could not have been issued in the teeth of this Hon'ble Court's directions in the judgement dt. 24.07.2023, which incidentally was also based on the NTCA's recommendation.

26. The Eco Camps at Collem proposal was placed a week later before the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife at its meeting held on 30.01.2024 which resulted in the formal recommendation by the Standing Committee as well. A copy of the NBWL minutes granting NOC for the project is at **Annexure 12**. The text of the so-called decision of the Standing Committee is almost entirely copied, word for word, from the final pages of the inspection report (Annexure 8). The SCNBWL did not consider the direction of this Hon'ble Court and the relevant information was not placed before it. The decision of the Standing Committee is liable to be challenged on these grounds, as it is contrary to the directions of this Hon'ble Court; the provisions of Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the provisions of the WLPA dealing with tigers and tiger reserves.

27. The decision of the Standing Committee was conveyed by the forest department to the GFDCL on 13.02.2024. The letter informed the GFDCL of a permit that may be required under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA), now renamed the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam Act. Copy of the letter dated 13.02.2024 is enclosed at **Annexure 13**. However, the officers of the

forest department ensured that this requirement was also nipped in the bud.

Project and Work Order without prior Forest Clearance

28. The Petitioner states that the Eco camps project and hence, also the Work Order, do not have necessary prior approval under the provisions of the FCA. Since officials of the Forest Department were involved, letters were exchanged between the Department and the GFDCL, which claimed that the project involved only "temporary construction" and therefore did not attract the provisions of the FCA.

29. In response to the letter dated 13.02.2024 stated in para 27 above, the GFDCL replied to the PCCF on 20.02.2024, *inter alia* clarified that the constructions forming a part of the project were not permanent in nature. However, this is patently not the case. The letter dt. 20.02.2024 is enclosed as **Annexure 14.**

30. In a letter dated 14.03.2024 issued by the PCCF and Chief Wildlife Warden to the GFDCL, the department reiterated its view that no prior FCA approval is required if the facility proposed was purely temporary and "involved no non-forest" activity. However, if otherwise, prior permission would be required. The said letter requested for clarification. A copy of the letter dated 14.03.2024 is at **Annexure 15**.

31. The Petitioner submits that in fact the structures are not at all temporary, as can be seen from the DPR [*Ann. 6*]. Some

of the structures are in the nature of permanent structures, as per the advice of professional architects, the Petitioner has consulted, as the diagrams show, the entire area is being taken out of bounds from wildlife:

a) The walls of the structures as described in the plan appear to be quite thick and in sections show it as a fully hatched brown with solid foundations, thus appearing to be a masonry structure. These would involve breaking of ground.

b) There is no mention of the use of natural or temporary materials in the drawings or report.

c) The costing of the rooms and other buildings are in keeping with the costing of conventional permanent structures.

32. The Work Order for the project dt. 26.05.2025 with the accompanying item list brings to light the true nature and scope of the project, with a wide variety of activities such as excavation/breaking of the Earth; and use of RCC/ reinforced cement concrete. [*Work order and item list are at Ann. 22 Colly*].

33. However, the design of this project is not in keeping with the spirit of a project in a highly eco sensitive zone as it appears that little thought has been given to the design with a very standard regimental layout. Certainly, the project diverts forest land which is part of the wildlife habitat to non-forestry use. It therefore requires mandatory prior

Forest Clearance, which has been bypassed by exchange of brief letters by officials all belonging to the same department but wearing different hats. As the page annexed at **Annexure 16** indicates, virtually all the staff of the GFDCL are on deputation from the Forest Department. The Petitioners are including here the actual design of the eco camps as displayed in the DPR itself:

Figure 15 Proposed Conceptual Development Plan

Figure 16 Conceptual Plan of Eco-Camp

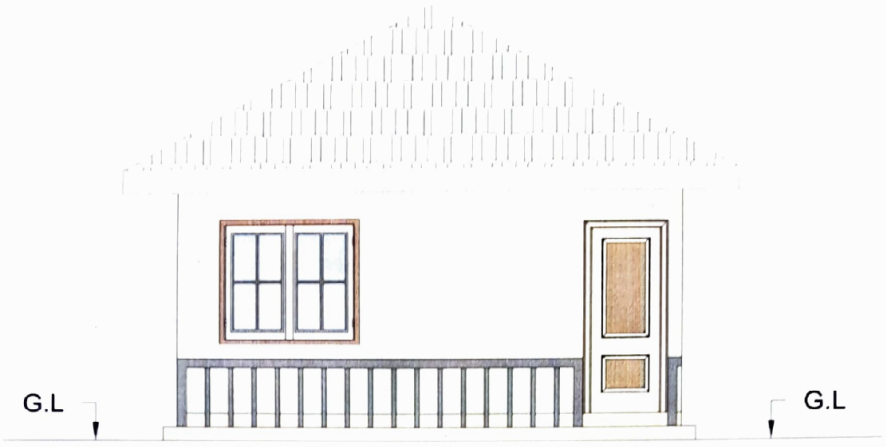


Figure 17 Conceptual Elevation of Eco-Camp

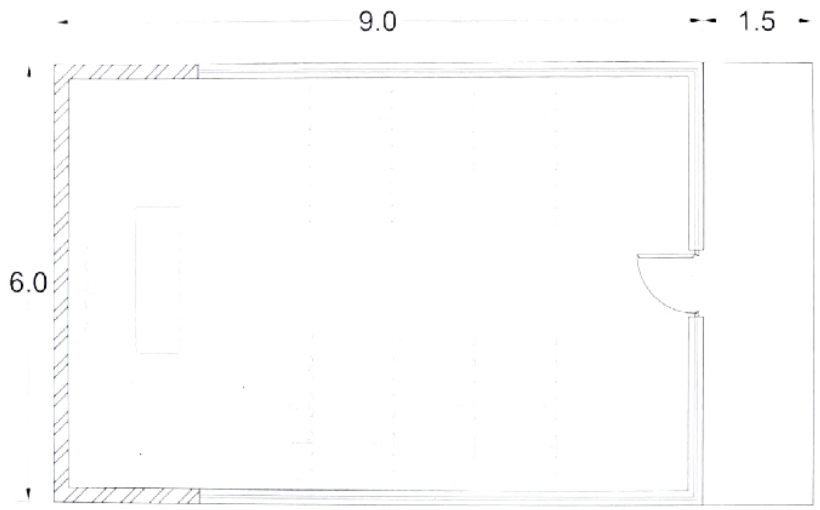


Figure 18 Plan of Mini Conference Hall

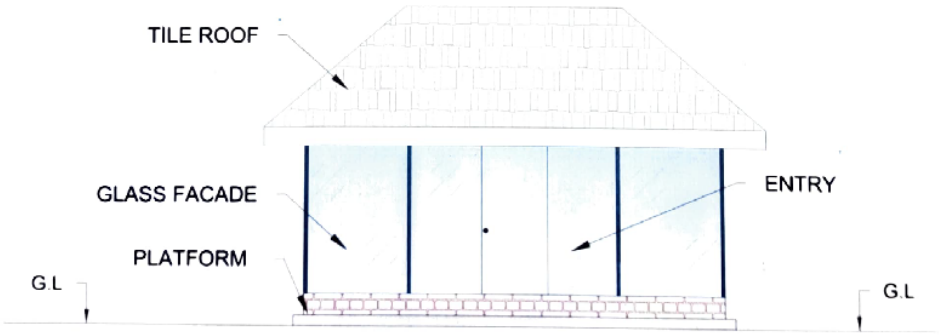


Figure 19 Front Elevation of Mini Conference Hall

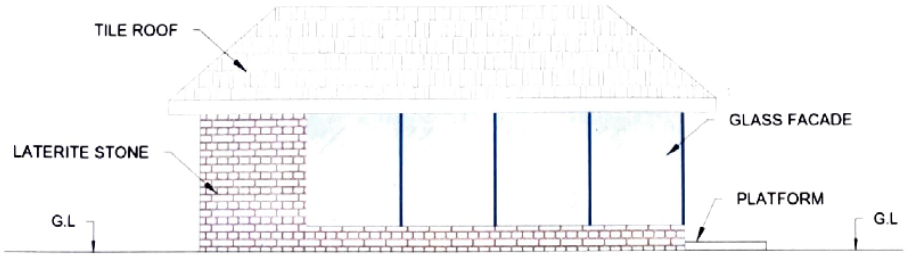


Figure 20 Side Elevation of Mini Conference Hall

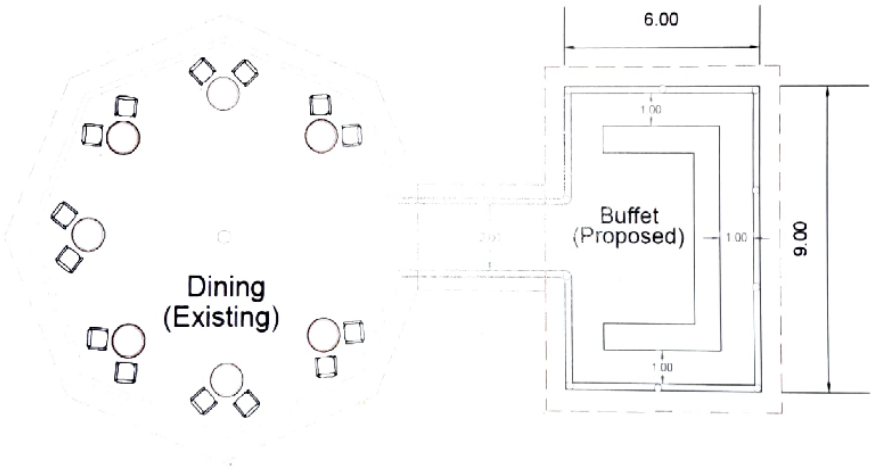


Figure 21 Plan of Dining and Buffet Area

34. The project recommended by the various authorities is restricted to 20,960 sq.mts. However, the project authorities are also planning to upgrade the parking area and internal paths at the site and likewise upgrading other related facilities. Kuccha roads in sanctuaries cannot be upgraded or tarred. There is already an order restraining the PWD and the Forest Department from upgrading the road to

Dudhsagar waterfall from Collem, on this ground. In any case, there are no approvals for these related aspects of the impugned project.

35. The claim is repeatedly made by the Forest Department that the project proposal received by them from the GFDCL is as per the norms provided in the Guidelines for Ecotourism in Protected Areas. A copy of the said Guidelines is at **Annexure 17**. Crucial portions of the Guidelines record the following requirements:

> *"(i) Eco-tourism planning: Eco-tourism shall be promoted on the basis of science-based planning. The plan shall form part of the duly approved Working Plan or Management Plan or Conservation Plan of the forest or wildlife area as the case may be, and shall include the carrying capacity analysis-based description of the eco-tourism site, time, duration, route, mode of travel and number of persons for visitations, and any support infrastructure needed. Wherever feasible, the eco-tourism plan will also be dovetailed with the Gram Panchayat Development Plan. The Protected Area (PA) manager along with a third party shall determine the carrying-capacity of eco-tourism site by taking into account the wide diversity of environmental, physical, social and economic criteria of development and management of eco-tourism sites as well as institutional capacities of their managers. The Eco-tourism plan needs to also factor in aspects of control of plastic pollution, waste*

management, noise pollution, sewage treatment and disposal, etc. The Eco-Tourism guidelines issued by the National Tiger Conservation Authority shall be applicable to Eco-tourism Tiger Reserves in the country.

(iv) Eco-tourism site development: The Eco-tourism site shall be developed only in eco-tourism zone and in eco-friendly manner. While developing support infrastructure for eco-tourism it shall be that the natural profile and ecological integrity of ecotourism site including its biodiversity value is maintained. Any ecotourism facility or structure on forest lands shall be subject to the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. However, no permanent structure shall be made/constructed to create ecotourism facility/structure, but temporary structures/facility made predominantly of natural material of local origin may be allowed in Protected Area or on forest land. Such ecotourism facility/structure shall be part of the approved Working Plan/Management Plan/Working Scheme Home stay managed by local communities on non-forest land shall be promoted States may develop benchmarks/standardized criteria based on site specificity, for adoption of best practices in eco-tourism including sustainable ecological management of the site, customer satisfaction, harmony with local culture and design, local

construction material used, employment types, environmental education facilities. Further, safety measures, especially for managing fire, flood, landslide, needs to be inbuilt into the ecotourism site development plan and adequate system needs to be in place for efficiently managing such." [Emphasis added]

36. The Guidelines do not permit or encourage permanent structures in a National Park. Further, the reference to the Guidelines is in the context of the Management Plan for the sanctuary. This plan took 25 years to be drawn up. Approving the plan and calling it up for justification of the project now is nothing but subterfuge to divert attention from the Court's judgement dated 24.07.2023 to draw up the Tiger Conservation Plan.

37. If the guidelines demand only structures that are purely temporary, they still insist under 4(iv) that "*any ecotourism facility or structure on forest lands shall be subject to the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980*." Thus, without a prior forest clearance order, no work order could be issued.

38. Besides evidence of permanent structures, and reliance on a management plan instead of the Tiger Conservation Plan, any intervention in ecotourism proposals must be decided on the sole ground of conservation education. This is confirmed by the National Wildlife Action Plan, extracts of which are at **Annexure 18**, which clearly states, as under:

"Overview and objectives:

1. *Eco-friendly and regulated wildlife-based tourism (also referred to as eco-tourism) has the potential to be a vital conservation tool as it helps with public support for wildlife conservation. However, in recent years mushrooming of tourism facilities has led to overuse, disturbance and serious management problems in a number of PAs.*
2. *In case of any conflict between tourism and conservation interests of a PA, the paradigm for decision must be that tourism exists for the PA and not vice versa and that demands of tourism must be subservient to and in consonance with the conservation interests of the PA. While revenues earned from tourism can help the management of the PA, maximization of income must never override the main goal of tourism viz. To educate the visitor and create in them a respect for nature."*

39. The actual permit issued by the CWLW is dated 22.07.2024, and is annexed herewith at **Annexure 19.** On 17th January, 2025, the PCCF/CWLW in its Note, wrote to the GFDCL informing it that the competent authority had approved the project, however the approval of the State Government was yet to be sought, annexed herewith at **Annexure 20**. The Administrative Order granting permission of the government to use the forest land was issued on 04.02.2025, annexed herewith at **Annexure 21**. The said Order granted GFDCL formal approval after noting that the land

ownership is with the forest department. It also stated that the finance department would fund the project and there would be local community involvement. In the meanwhile, a Work Order has been issued to a manufacturing company, M/s Unifab Infra Projects Pvt Ltd. to commence work on the project and complete it within 90 days. The Work Order dt. 26.06.2025, along with Agreement dt. 06.08.2025 obtained under RTI, is at **Annexure 22 Colly.** The company information obtained online is enclosed at **Annexure 23**. It does not indicate any connection with wildlife conservation or eco-tourism.

Project harmful to wildlife and a nuisance

40. The Petitioners submit that the entire project is nothing but a monumental scam being done for and by private parties solely for commercial gains at the expense of wildlife and will in fact harm the wildlife activity specifically forbidden under the WLPA. The most absurd part of the proposal is to segregate the area and the tourists staying within the project from the wildlife and reptiles through an electric fence.

a) The project authorities have obtained approval from the Respondents to erect an atrocious solar powered electric fence of 645 running meters around the 20960 sq. mts. plot to protect its tourist customers from any attack or interference from the wildlife, be it tigers, sloth bears, bison or other animals. In his Note prepared on the impact under Section 29 of the Wildlife Protection Act, the Dy. Conservator of Forests observes:

"Possibility of Human wildlife conflicts:

- *Solar fencing around the proposed site is proposed without affecting the animal movement.*
- *Free movement of visitors will not be allowed.*
- *Animal rescuers need to be kept for rescues of reptiles and other wildlife which are found selected located along with first aid facilities."*

A copy of the said Note of the D.C.F. is enclosed at **Annexure 23A Colly.**

b) The Petitioner submits that the WLPA specifically prohibits harming animals or restraining their movements in any manner within the sanctuary.

c) The solar-powered electric fence will create a boundary within the sanctuary boundary, thus excluding the area from access to wildlife and preventing free wildlife movement across the plateau. This is not permitted under the WLPA provisions. Right of Way in a sanctuary is the right of way of the wildlife, and not human beings.

d) The proposed area being a forest, is a habitual haunt of sloth bears. In other forested areas of Goa having sloth bears, such as Surla, there have been three reported incidents of sloth bear attacks on tourists in the past 5 years. News reports of such attacks are at **Annexure 24 Colly**. Wildlife cannot be excluded from its own habitat especially when it is part and parcel of a wildlife sanctuary. These incidents are eye openers and must be

treated as serious warnings of what could occur in the proposed eco campsite area.

e) The Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park, like other wildlife sanctuaries in Goa and elsewhere, is also an ideal resting place of various snake species. The DPR proposes to take measures to ensure protection for its customers from snakes.

f) The entire land bearing the Eco Campsite is part of the Tiger corridor, and now part of the core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve. While the provisions of the WLPA dealing with Tiger Reserves require evacuation of people from the core zone, the impugned project is designed to bring people to reside within the core zone, which is completely incomprehensible.

g) The resource availability for the project proposal indicates that there is no public water supply available at site, and there is only one well at the camp site catering to the entire campsite. The resort managers are therefore bound to dig bore wells and extract water from the sanctuary, an activity that is expressly forbidden by the Act.

GFDCL and M/s Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited, have no right to enter WLS or use its lands except in terms of the provisions of the WL Act and the National Wildlife Action Plan

41. The Petitioners state that neither the GFDCL nor M/s Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited have any rights to

enter the sanctuary except under a valid permit issued by the CWLW. Such an order cannot be issued for construction of an eco-camp or for enclosure of the eco camp at the expense of the wildlife and the wildlife habitat.

42. In any case, the CWLW is bound by the order and judgment of this Hon'ble Court dt. 24.07.2023 and to ensure that, by way of the precautionary principle, there is no interference with the core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve. To pretend that there was no extant direction of the Hon'ble High Court at the time of issuing his permit is not conduct that one would expect from a high-ranking officer in the Forest department. By notification, the person occupying the post of the Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests is designated CWLW of the sanctuaries in the State. As stated hereinabove, the CWLW and the forest department were very much respondents in the PIL WP 15/2022 dealing with the Tiger Reserve in the State.

GROUNDS

43. The Petitioner is therefore approaching this Hon'ble Court in public interest on the following major grounds, among others:-

A. The Petitioners submit that the various authorities in this petition narrated above were duty-bound to record and consider the judgment and directions of this Hon'ble Court dt. 24.07.2023 requiring the notification

of the area as a tiger reserve. No human interference or modification of the habitat is permitted within the core zone of a Tiger Reserve. The judgment of this Hon'ble Court does not appear to have been considered, as far as the decision-making minutes show, either by the Chief Wildlife Warden, the State Board of Wildlife, or the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife, or even the NTCA. This is a major lacuna and indicative of significant non-application of mind, as the Forest Department is a party to the judicial proceedings that led to the Tiger Reserve judgment, and the present project is being organised and managed entirely by a menage of forest officials populating the forest department and the GFDCL on deputation. The Petitioners cannot state with any confidence whether the exclusion of the Tiger Reserve from the decision-making was done on purpose, as the project would not normally get rational approvals.

B. On this ground of apparent (or wilful) non-disclosure and non-consideration alone, any development work pursuant to all the permissions/approvals granted for the project is required to be forthwith stayed as these approvals/permissions are being issued in contravention of the order and judgment of this Hon'ble Court dt. 24.07.2023 which requires notification of the Tiger Reserve. There was therefore simply no application of mind or non-consideration of

material aspects. All the approvals are liable to be quashed and set aside.

C. The Petitioners submit that till this Hon'ble Court's judgment and its directions continue to rule the field, there is absolutely no question of action being taken based on a Work Order for commencement of work in an area which falls within the proposed core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve. There can be little justification for adding to the population of the core zone, when the law requires depopulation. In any case, the tiger judgment disallows any further encroachment of the sanctuary. The impugned project is nothing but an encroachment.

D. The decisions to permit an approx Rs. 2.50 crore eco camp within the National Park, more particularly, the core zone of the to-be-notified Tiger Reserve, could only have been taken by the CWLW after considering all facts and laws applicable. However, in the instant case, all the decisions were made by actors or persons extraneous to the sanctuary management under the WLPA. The CWLW has functioned as an employee of the Government when he was duty bound to act in the interests of wildlife and the protection of the wildlife habitat. In fact, the permit has been issued by him pursuant to all decisions already having been taken for the area falling within his jurisdiction by external actors and agencies. In any event, the project in question could not have been approved under Section

29 of the WLPA, as it is in no way aiding the improvement and better management of wildlife.

E. The Eco camp of Rs. 2.50 crores requires diversion of forest land and involves breaking of ground. However, there is no prior approval under FCA, 1980, as the DPR itself and the expenditures indicate permanent structures, protected by a permanent solar powered electric fence. Forest clearance in fact is bound to be rejected in the present instance.

F. The data provided in the DPR and the project design clearly establish the permanent nature of the structures associated with the project.

G. The GFDCL and the M/s Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited do not have any expertise in either wildlife management or eco-tourism.

H. The designation of the GFDCL by the Forest Department to promote ecotourism in the protected areas is illegal and contrary to the provisions of the Wildlife Act, 1972. The Forest Department has no such powers.

I. There is a gross disharmony between the commercial interests of GFDCL and those of wildlife conservation. Ecotourism as perceived in the management plans for Protected Areas is for conservation education. However, GFDCL is not fulfilling this objective. Through the impugned project, GFDCL is pushing so-called high class ecotourism modules purely for profit.

For example, Bondla cottages were available for visitors at the nominal rate of Rs.750-1,000 per room and dormitory beds for Rs.100 per person. After GFDCL took over, the room rent has been jacked up to Rs.9,400 per room and Rs.3,400 per person.

44. The Petitioners, having heard of these proposals, made applications under RTI for all documents related to the projects and approvals with the Forest Department and the GFDCL, since there was no public disclosure of details and these were kept strictly under wraps. The last of these documents was provided to the Petitioners on 07.08.2025. Thereafter, legal advice having been obtained, the present PIL is filed immediately after the required documents were received.

45. The Petitioners placed on record a work order issued by the GFDCL dated 26.06.2025 (Annexure 22 Colly), which requires the Resp. no. 8 to complete the work of constructing 10 nos. MS Prefab Eco Huts at site within 90 days from the date of receipt of the work order. Incalculable harm will be caused to the wildlife habitat particularly the habitat of tigers, sloth bears and snakes, along with impeding the movement of tigers and other wildlife. The project is obviously designed to present the Hon'ble Court with a *fait accompli* in view of its judgment on the Tiger Reserve.

46. The Petitioner has addressed detailed objections to the Eco Camps project, as soon as it obtained some information about it, with the GFDCL. A copy of the letter of the Goa

Foundation dated 06.08.2025 is at **Annexure 25.** There has been neither acknowledgement nor response to the said letter till date.

47. Considering the above, the Petitioners respectfully submit that they are entitled to a stay of any development work in relation to the project till such time as the judgment and directions of this Hon'ble Court dt. 24.07.2023 rule the field.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

48. *Inter alia,* the Petitioners are relying on information received under the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005, the official websites of Govt. departments, documents forming a part of this Hon'ble Court's records in P.I.L. W.P. 15/2022, and newspaper articles.

DELAY, IF ANY, IN FILING THE PETITION

49. There is no delay in the filing of this petition, as work is yet to commence. The Petitioners, having heard of these proposals through the minutes of the SBWL, had applications made under RTI for all documents related to the projects and approvals with the GFDCL, since there was no public disclosure of details on their websites and information was being kept strictly under wraps. The last of these documents was provided under RTI on 07.08.2025. Thereafter, legal advice having been obtained, the present

PIL is filed immediately after the required documents have been received.

REPRESENTATIONS MADE

50. The Petitioner addressed a detailed letter to the GFDCL on 06.08.2025, listing out its objections to the Eco Camp project and the severe dangers the proposed project posed to the highly eco sensitive Tiger Reserve area, and called for the project to be scrapped. A copy of the said letter is enclosed to this petition [*Ann. 25*].

DOCUMENTS RELIED UPON

51. List of documents to be relied upon is provided in the index.

NATURE AND EXTENT OF INJURY CAUSED

52. The Petitioner submits that a project of this kind will seriously affect both wildlife and the habitat of the wildlife of the sanctuary. It will seriously impact the tiger reserve and existing tiger corridor. The work order issued, if allowed to commence, will lead to large scale-construction activity, damage to the sanctuary lands through use of construction equipment. The entire plot is surrounded by intense forest. Since the reports indicate complete absence of Public Water Supply and thereby the entire camp placing complete reliance on only one well at the campsite, efforts will be made to tap groundwater from the sanctuary, against

which there is a bar under Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act. The solar powered electric fence will certainly be a major threat to the well-being of wildlife habituated to using the area.

PRAYERS

53. The Petitioners are therefore approaching this Hon'ble Court for the following reliefs.

a) For an order calling for the records of the case and thereafter for an order to quash and set aside the approvals granted for the Eco Camp project by the Respondents, as listed below:

i. SBWL recommendation dated 20.11.2023;
ii. State Govt approval dated December 15.12.2023;
iii. NTCA recommendation dated 24.01.2024;
iv. SCNBWL recommendation dated 30.01.2024, Ref. No.: WL/GA/Others/443396/2023;
v. CWLW permit dated 22.07.2024, Ref. No.: WL/GA/Others/443396/2023, File No. 1-790(P);
vi. Order of State Government dated 04.02.2025, Ref. No.: CWLW-114/FD/2023-24/4620;
vii. Work order dated 23.06.2025, Ref. No.: II/GFDC/ARANYAK/PON/2025-26/980.
viii. Agreement dated 06.08.2025, between GFDCL and M/s Unifab Infra Projects Pvt. Ltd.

b) For costs of this petition;

c) For any other orders this Hon'ble Court may in its wisdom seem fit to grant in the facts and circumstances of this case.

INTERIM RELIEF

d) Pending final hearing and disposal of this PIL, for an order restraining the Goa Forest Development Corporation; M/s Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited; and the agents and contractors of these parties, from carrying out any change or development on Sy No. 38/1 of Collem village, Dharbondara, Goa.

e) For an ex-parte, ad interim relief in term of prayer clause (d) above.

CAVEAT

54. No notice has been received of lodging a caveat by the opposite parties.

For the above, the Petitioner is very grateful.

PLACE: Porvorim - Goa
DATE: 21.08.2025 PETITIONER

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE OF BOMBAY AT PORVORIM, GOA

P.I.L. Writ Petition No. /2025

The Goa Foundation ….Petitioner

V/s

State of Goa & Ors …Respondents

AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF THE PETITION

I, Dr. Claude Alvares, Indian National, Secretary of the Petitioner organization above named, do solemnly state on oath as under:

1. I say that I have today filed a Writ Petition in public interest for the reliefs sought therein, which has been prepared under the instructions of the Petitioners.

2. I state that there is no personal gain, private motive or oblique reason in filing the PIL.

3. The Petitioners are ready to pay costs as ordered by the Hon'ble Court, if it is ultimately held that the petition is frivolous or has been filed for extraneous consideration or that

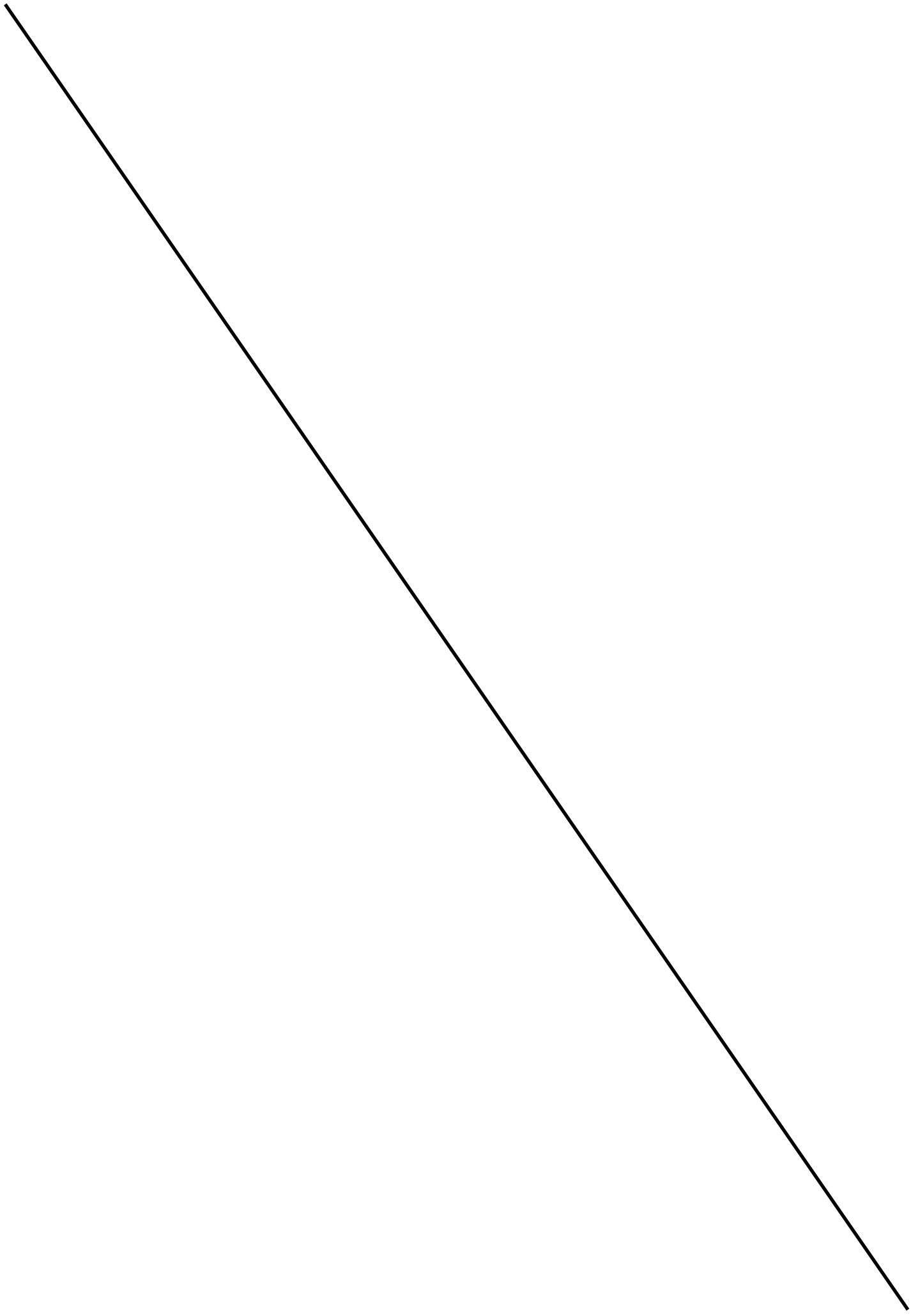
it lacks bonafides.

4. The Petitioners shall disclose the source of their information, leading to the filing of the PIL, if and when called upon by the Hon'ble Court to do so.

5. That the contents of paragraphs 1, 2(p), 3(p), 5(p), 6(p), 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17(p), 18(p), 19, 20(p), 21, 22(p), 23(p), 24, 25(p), 26(p), 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34(p), 35(p), 36(p), 38(p), 39, 40(p), 41, 42(p), 43(p), 44, 45(p), 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52(p), 53 and 54 of the accompanying petition are correct and true to the best of my knowledge and information collected by us from the Departments of Government and official gazettes/website/internet which I believe to be true, and the contents of paras 2(p), 3(p), 4, 5(p), 6(p), 17(p), 18(p), 20(p), 22(p), 23(p), 25(p), 26(p), 34(p), 35(p), 36(p), 37, 38(p), 40(p), 42(p), 43(p), 45(p) and 52(p) are my submissions made on legal advice which I believe to be true and correct. No part of it is false and nothing material has been concealed therefrom.

6. I say that the documents annexed are true copies of their originals.

Solemnly affirmed at Porvorim - Goa,
this the 21st day of August, 2025 Deponent



ANNEXURE 1

ITEM NO.12 COURT NO.1 SECTION IX

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Petition(s) for Special Leave to Appeal (C) No.20683/2023

(Arising out of impugned final judgment and order dated 24-07-2023 in PILWP No.15/2022 passed by the High Court of Judicature at Bombay at Goa)

THE STATE OF GOA THROUGH CHIEF SECRETARY & ORS. Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

THE GOA FOUNDATION & ORS. Respondent(s)

Date : 25-09-2023 This petition was called on for hearing today.

CORAM :
HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE J.B. PARDIWALA
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE MANOJ MISRA

For Petitioner(s) Mr. Mukul Rohatgi, Sr. Adv.
Ms. Misha Rohatgi, AOR
Mr. Nakul Mohta, Adv.
Ms. Sukhada Wagle, Adv.
Ms. Sanaya Contractor, Adv.
Ms. Riya Dhingra, Adv.

For Respondent(s) Ms. Indira Jaising, Sr. Adv.
Ms. Norma Alvares, Adv.
Mr. Om Dcosta, Adv.
Ms. Ira S Mahajan, Adv.
Mr. Paras Nath Singh, Adv.
Mr. Rohin Bhatt, Adv.
Mr. Sahil Bhalaik, AOR
Mr. Tushar Giri, Adv.
Mr. Siddharth Anil Khanna, Adv.
Ms. Gulsahan Jahan, Adv.

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

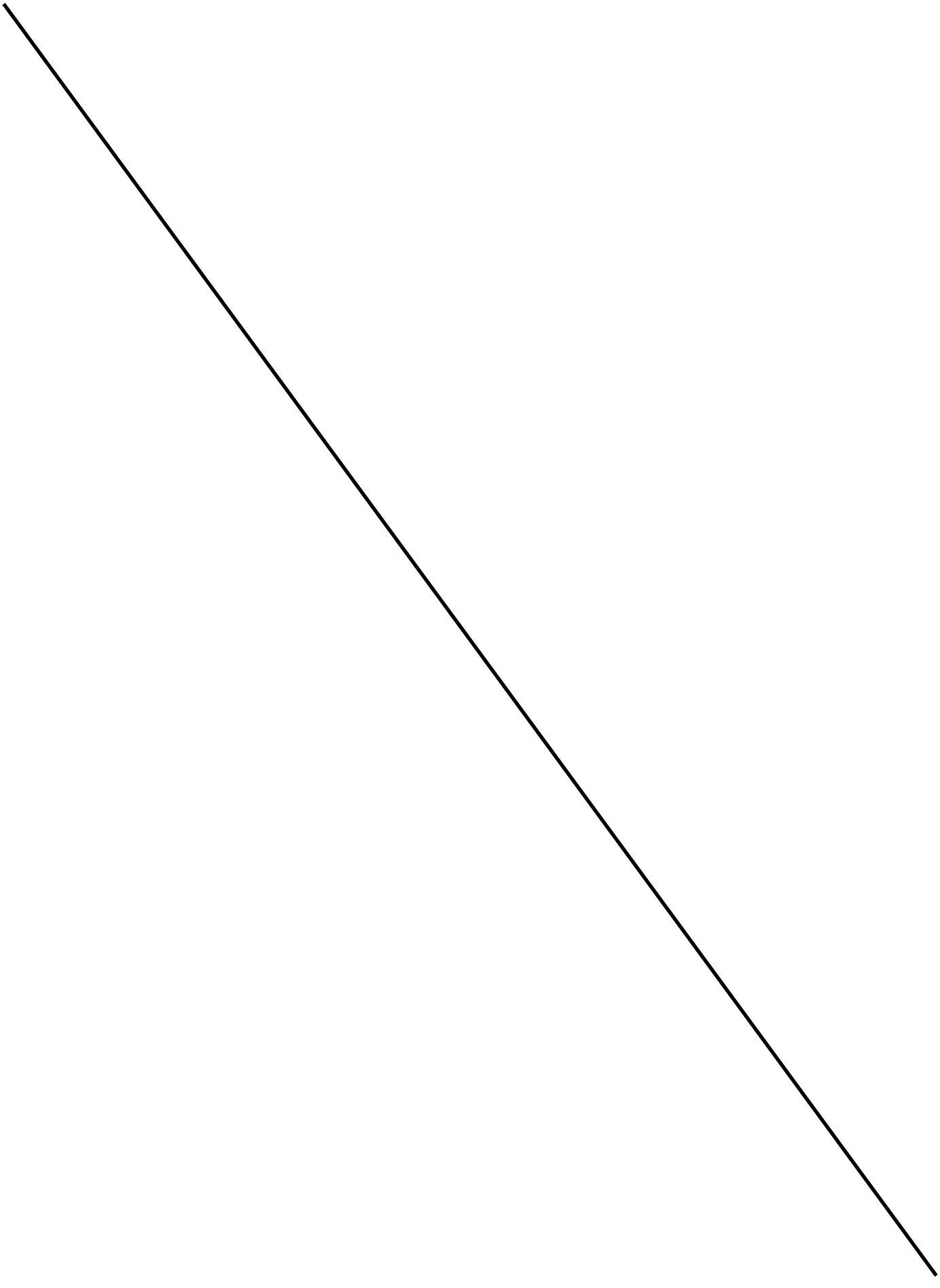
1 Issue notice.

Signature Not Verified
Digitally signed by CHETAN KUMAR
Date: 2023.09.25 16:23:10 IST
Reason:

(CHETAN KUMAR)
A.R.-cum-P.S.

(SAROJ KUMARI GAUR)
Assistant Registrar

43



shakuntala

ANNEXURE 1-A COLLY

IN THE HIGH COURT OF BOMBAY AT GOA

MISC. CIVIL APPLICATION NO. 1854 OF 2024(F)
IN
PIL WRIT PETITION NO. 15 OF 2022

STATE OF GOA, THR. ITS DEPUTY COLLECTOR, SANGUEM. ... APPLICANT

VS

THE GOA FOUNDATION, THR. ITS SECRETARY, DR CLAUDE ALVARES ... RESPONDENT

****

Ms. Maria Correia, Additional Government Advocate for the Applicant.

Ms. Norma Alvares, Senior Advocate with Mr. Om D'Costa, Advocate for the Respondent.

Mr. Raviraj Chodankar, Central Government Standing Counsel for Respondent Nos. 5 and 6 in PILWP No.15/2022.

CORAM: DEVENDRA KUMAR UPADHYAYA, CJ. & BHARAT P. DESHPANDE, J.

DATED: 17th OCTOBER 2024

P.C:

1. This application has been moved on behalf of the State with the prayer for extending the time frame prescribed vide Judgment and Order dated 24/07/2023 passed in PILWP No.15/2022 for determining and settling rights and claims of the Traditional Forest Dwellers in accordance with the Wildlife Protection Act, by one year from the date of disposal of the present application.

2. The prayer has been opposed by the learned Counsel for the Petitioner who has stated that requisite number of staff has not been deputed by the State for implementing the Judgement and Order dated 24/07/2023 passed in the aforementioned PILWP No.15/2022.

3. The Application was moved on 30/07/2024, more than two months have already elapsed from the date the application was moved and accordingly, we in the interest of justice, extend the time by 9 months from today for determining and settling the rights and claims of the Traditional Forest Dwellers under the provisions of Wildlife Protection Act. We further direct that adequate number of staff for the said purpose shall also be deputed by the State.

4. The application stands disposed of in the aforesaid terms.

BHARAT P. DESHPANDE, J. **THE CHIEF JUSTICE**

Signed by: SHAKUNTALA ZALMI
Designation: Personal Assistant
Date: 18/10/2024 16:16:24

shakuntala

IN THE HIGH COURT OF BOMBAY AT GOA

CONTEMPT PETITION NO. 2166 OF 2024
IN
PIL WRIT PETITION NO. 15 OF 2022

THE GOA FOUNDATION, THR. ITS SECRETARY, DR CLAUDE ALVARES ... PETITIONER

VS

STATE OF GOA, THR. ITS CHIEF SECRETARY AND 2 ORS. ... RESPONDENT

****

Ms. Norma Alvares, Senior Advocate with Mr. Om D'Costa, Advocate for the Petitioner.

Ms. Maria Correia, Additional Government Advocate for the Respondents-State.

Mr. Raviraj Chodankar, Central Government Standing Counsel for Respondent Nos. 5 and 6 in PILWP No.15/2022.

CORAM: DEVENDRA KUMAR UPADHYAYA, CJ. & BHARAT P. DESHPANDE, J.

DATED: 17th OCTOBER 2024

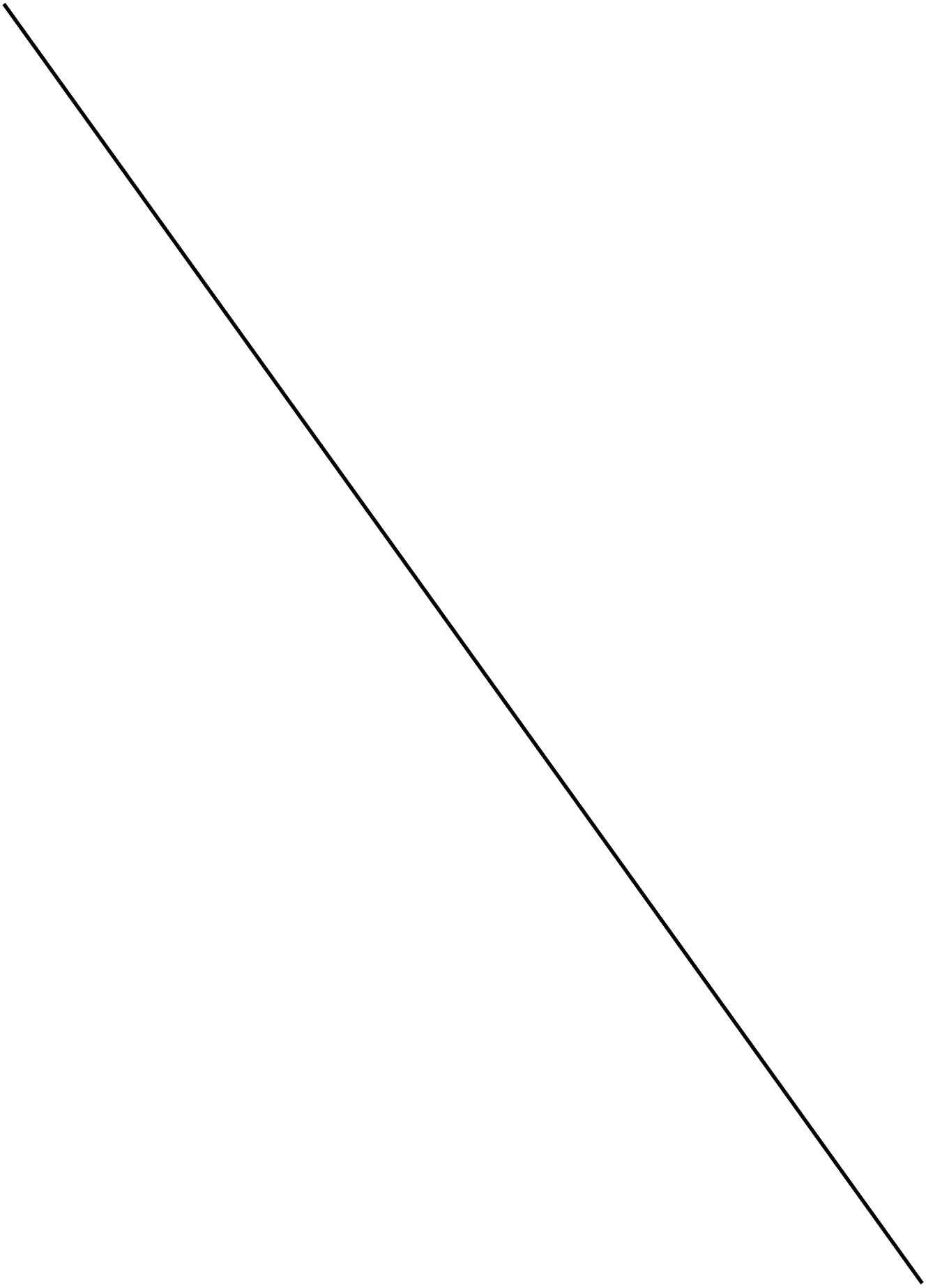
P.C:

1. We have passed an order on Miscellaneous Civil Application No. 1854 of 2024 (Filing) today, whereby time for determining and settling the rights of the Traditional Forest Dwellers has been extended by a period of 9 months.

2. In view of the above, the contempt petition also stands disposed of.

BHARAT P. DESHPANDE, J. **THE CHIEF JUSTICE**

Signed by: SHAKUNTALA ZALMI
Designation: Personal Assistant
Date: 18/10/2024 16:18:00



ANNEXURE 2 COLLY

C E R T I F I C A T E
****

In view of the Affidavit filed by the Secretary of the Society ' THE GOA FOUNDATION ' for the purpose of 3 (B) (4) of the Societies Registration (Goa Amendment) Act,1998, it is hereby certified that the registration of the said Society, registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under No.23/Goa/86 is hereby renewed for a further period of five years w.e.f. 11-6-2000.

Dated:- 2nd August, 2000.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL SOCIETIES
महानिरीक्षक कार्यालय
PANAJI
पणजी

(P. V. S. Sardessai)
Inspector General
By -Order

Registration renewed till 11-06-2015
Dated 21/11/2011

Office of Inspector General of Societies
संस्था महानिरीक्षक कार्यालय

21/11/2011

Inspector General of Societies/
/District Registrar (North Goa)
By Order

Registration renewed till 11-06-2020
Dated 24-09-2015

Office of Inspector General of Societies

24/9/2015

Inspector General of Societies/
/District Registrar (North Goa)
By Order

Registration renewed till 11-06-2025
Dated 11-09-2020

Office of Inspector General of Societies
संस्था महानिरीक्षक कार्यालय
North Goa, Panaji

11/9/2020

Inspector General of Societies/
/District Registrar (North Goa)
By Order

GOA
FOUNDATION

G-8, St Britto's Apartments, Feira Alta, Mapusa 403507 Goa, INDIA
Tel: +91-(0)832-2256479; 2263305 (also fax)
E-mail: goafoundation@gmail.com Website: www.goafoundation.org

Certified Copy of Resolution of the Goa Foundation

Certified that the resolution copied below was unanimously passed and adopted at the AGM of the Society held on 13.8.2021:

"This AGM hereby authorises either the President or the Secretary to approach appropriate fora including the NGT, High Court and Supreme Court in respect of the public interest matters approved for filing after discussion at the AGM held on 13th August 2021."

(Dr Claude Alvares)

Secretary

ANNEXURE 2-A

IN THE HON'BLE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE OF BOMBAY AT PORVORIM GOA

PIL WRIT PETITION NO._____ OF 2025

The Goa Foundation ……**Petitioners**

v/s

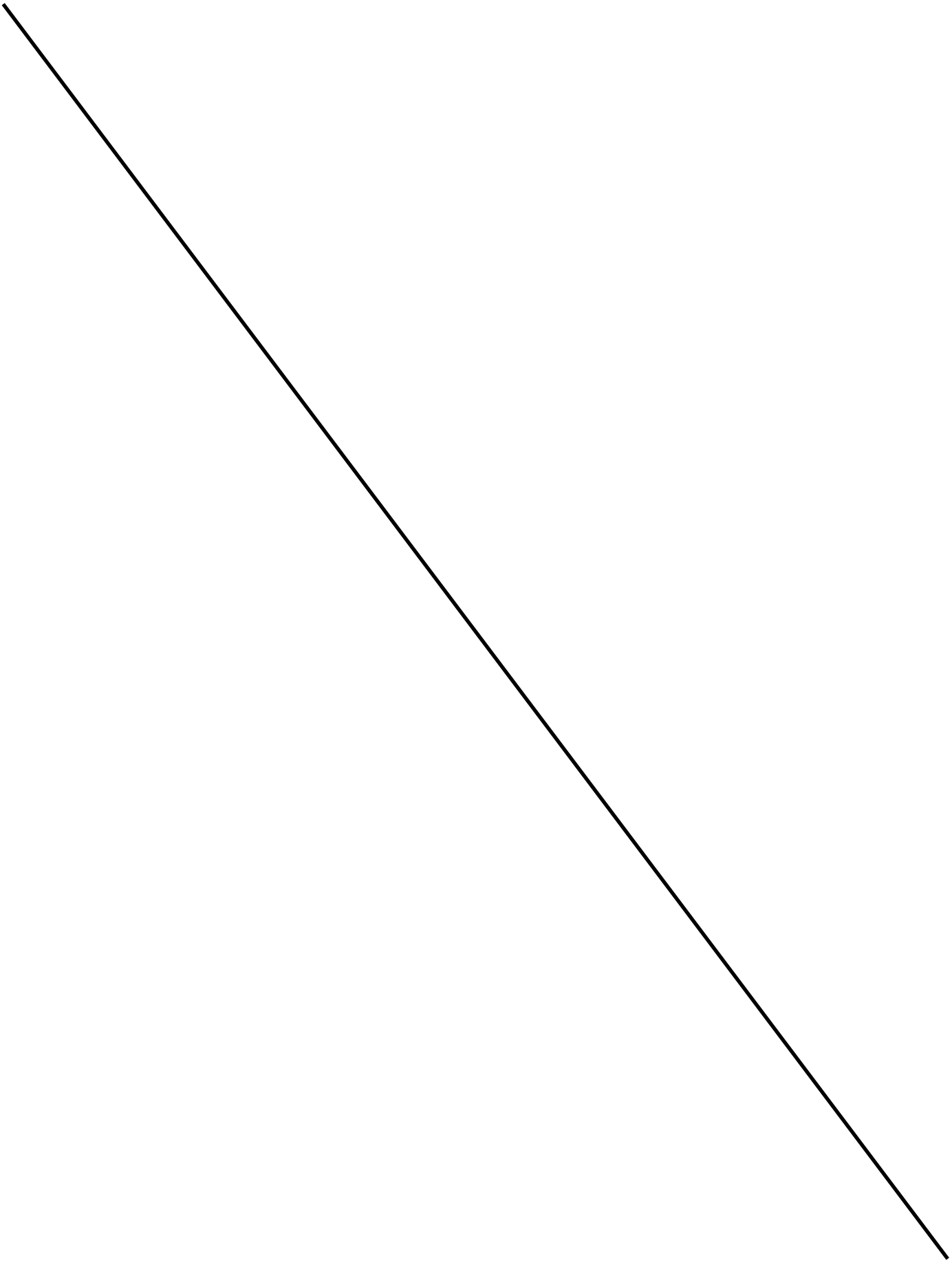
The State of Goa. & Ors ….. **Respondents**

UNDERTAKING

I, Claude Alvares, Secretary of the Petitioner Organisation, undertake that I will disclose the source of information leading to the filing of the Public Interest Litigation if and when called upon by the Court to do so.

Place: Mapusa, Goa

Date: Petitioner



ANNEXURE 3

GOVERNMENT OF GOA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
WILDLIFE & ECOTOURISM (NORTH) DIVISION
1ST LIFT, 4TH FLOOR, JUNTA HOUSE,
PANAJI – 403 001 (GOA)

Phone: 0832-2229
Fax : 0832- 2422
E mail: dcfwlnorth-forest.goa@ni

No. 1-579/WL&ET(N)/14-15/2280 Dated: 13/12/2016

To
The Dy. Conservator of Forests,
Working Plan division,
Ponda – Goa.

Sub: Additional information on Proposed Tiger Reserve in the state of Goa.
Ref: Your office communication no. DCF(WP)/EST/TIGER RES/2016-17/464 dated 06/12/16.

Sir,

Please find enclosed herewith, the proposed Tiger Reserve Plan for Mac Wildlife Sanctuary and Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park, Molle showing the location of all habitats, all weather roads, large habitations excluded fro the proposed tiger reserve and household particulars inside & outside the proposed Tig Reserve for your information and necessary action.

Yours faithfully,
13/12/1
(Dr. A. Anil Kumar, IFS
Dy. Conservator of Fores

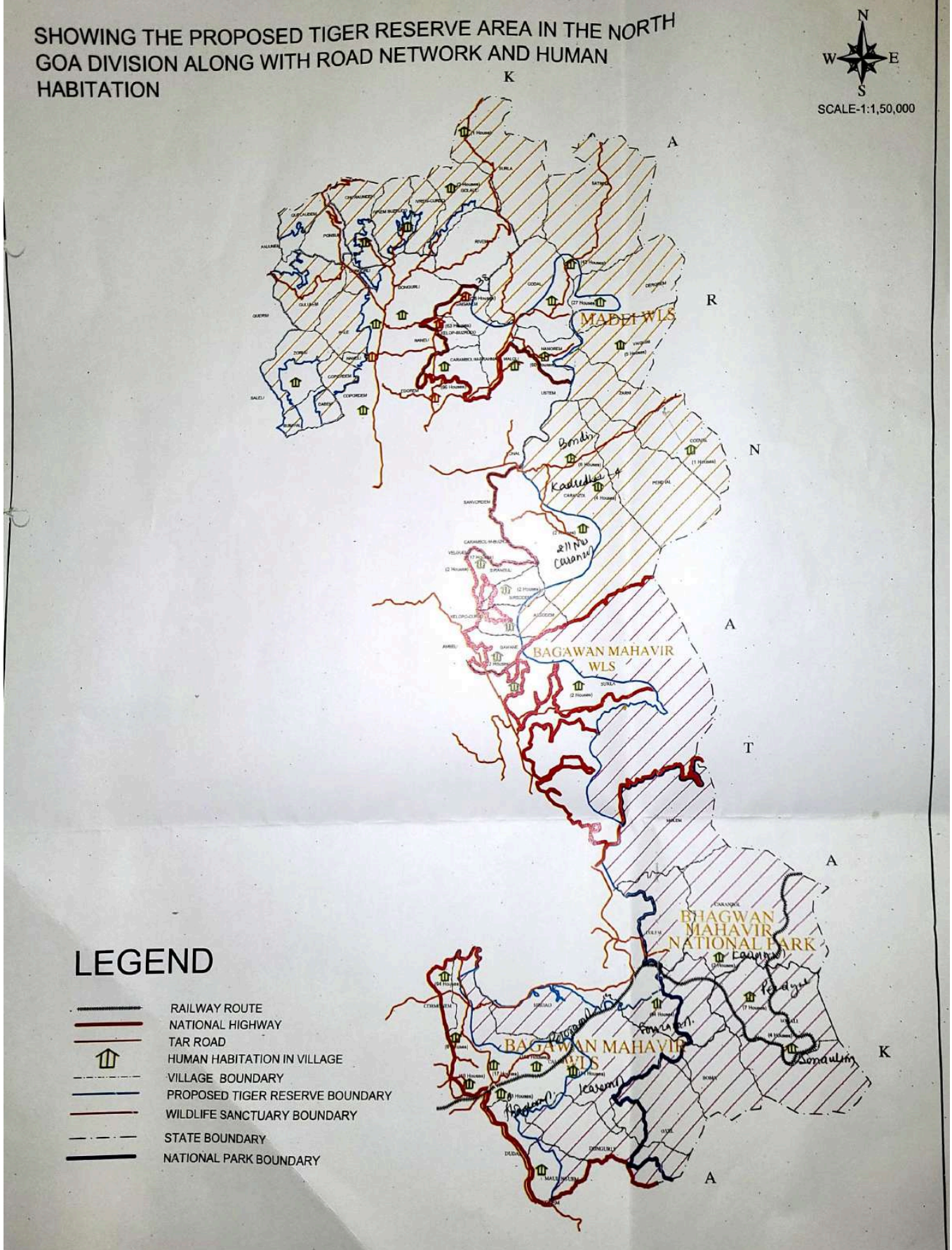
Encls: a.a

"Swach Bharat Nital Goem"
Towards greener and cleaner Goa

CERTIFIED COPY
ISSUED UNDER RTI
APIO / PIO

PLAN

SHOWING THE PROPOSED TIGER RESERVE AREA IN THE NORTH GOA DIVISION ALONG WITH ROAD NETWORK AND HUMAN HABITATION



ANNEXURE 4

Amrut/Suchitra

IN THE HIGH COURT OF BOMBAY AT GOA

PIL WRIT PETITION NO.15/2022

THE GOA FOUNDATION, through its Secretary, Dr. Claude Alvares, age 71 years, having Regd. Office at Room No.7, above Mapusa Clinic, Mapusa, Goa 403 507, PAN No. AAAAG0249C Email id: goafoundation@gmail.com

... PETITIONER

Versus

1. STATE OF GOA, Through its Chief Secretary, Secretariat, Porvorim, Goa.

2. THE GOA STATE BOARD FOR WILDLIFE, through its Member Secretary, CWW, with address at Gomantak Maratha Samaj Building, Panjim, Goa 403001

3. THE CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN, Madei Wildlife Sanctuary, with address at Gomantak Maratha Samaj Building Panjim, Goa 403001.

4. PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS (PCCF) Government of Goa, with address at Gomantak Maratha Samaj Building, Panjim, Goa 403001.

5. NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY, B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi-110003.

6. MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS & CC, through its Secretary Indira Paryavaran Bhavan, Jor Bagh Rd, New Delhi 110 003.

... RESPONDENTS

Ms Norma Alvares with Mr Om D'Costa, Advocates for the Petitioner.
Mr D. Pangam, Advocate General with Ms Maria Correia, Additional Government Advocate for the Respondents 1 to 4 (State).
Mr R. Chodankar, Central Govt. Standing Counsel for Respondents No.5 and 6.

CORAM: **M. S. SONAK &**
BHARAT P. DESHPANDE, JJ.

Reserved on: **10th JULY 2023**
Pronounced on: **24th JULY 2023**

JUDGMENT: (Per M. S. Sonak, J.)

निर्वनो वध्यते व्याघ्रो निर्व्याघ्रं छिद्यते वनम्।
तस्माद्व्याघ्रो वनं रक्षेद्वयं व्याघ्रं च पालयेत् ॥
-महाभारत - उद्योग पर्व : ५.२९.५७

If there is no forest, then the tiger gets killed;
if there is no tiger, then the forest gets destroyed.
Hence, the tiger protects the forest and the forest guards the tiger!

-Mahabharat (Kumbhaghonam Edition) – Udyoga Parva: 5.29.57
(NTCA Report on Status of Tigers - 2022)

1. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) estimates that 3726 to 5578 tigers live in the wild worldwide. Out of these, the tiger population in India, as per the 2023 Tiger Census, is estimated at 3167. In 1947, at the time of

independence of India, the estimate in India was 40,000 tigers. Therefore, in less than 76 years, the tiger population has decreased by almost 92%. The Tigers are still considered endangered and remain on IUCN's red list, assessing the endangered species status. About 2000 tigers (65%) are estimated to exist within the notified tiger reserves in India. Thus, about 1167 tigers (35 %) are outside India's declared 54 tiger reserves. The exhaustive studies undertaken or commissioned by the Central Ministry of Environment and Forest indicate the need for better-protected tiger source sites, especially tiger reserves, to maintain viable populations. The studies note that the area occupied by tigers outside protected areas has decreased considerably. This demonstrates the need to protect the Tiger Corridors to facilitate the movement of tigers between source sites. (*See* ***Jhala Y., Gopal R., Mathur V., Ghosh P., Negi H.S., Narain S., et al. (2021), Recovery of tigers in India: Critical introspection and potential lessons, People and Nature.***)

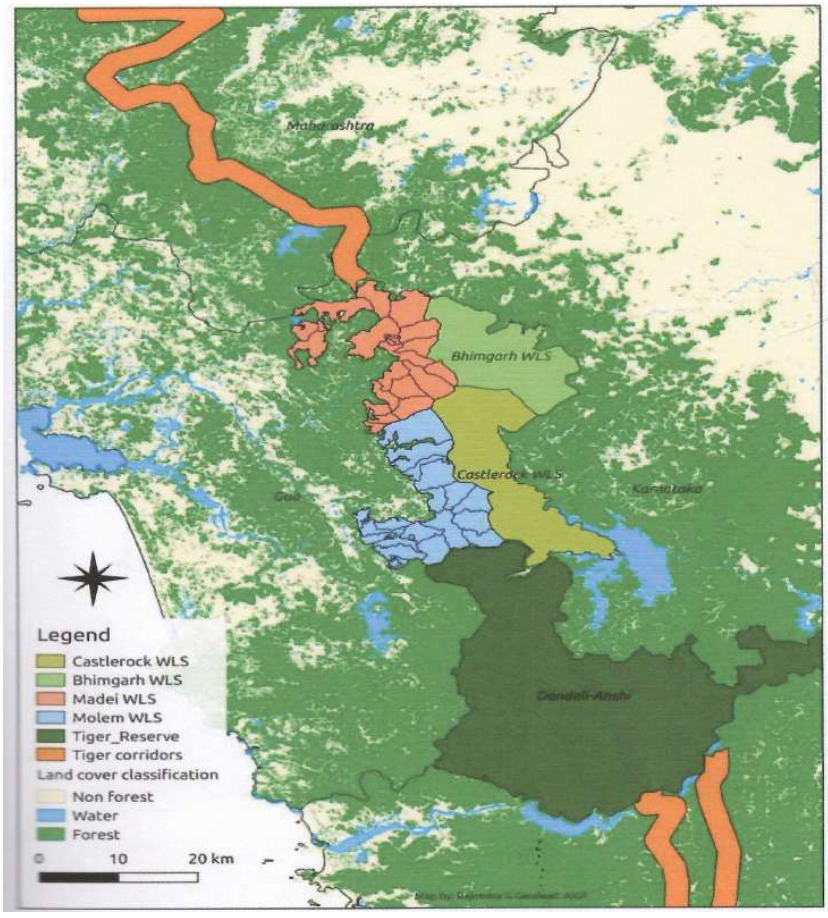
2. The Status of Tigers (Co-predators & Prey) in India, 2014 reports that the Cotigao-Mhadei Mhadei forest complex of Goa comprises five protected areas, namely, Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary (208 km^2), Bhagwan Mahavir Wild Life Sanctuary (133 km^2), Bhagwan Mahavir National Park (107 km^2), Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary (211 km^2) and Cotigao Wildlife

Sanctuary (86 km^2) along the Western Ghats ridge. They cover an area of about 750 km^2, forming a contiguous belt of forest connecting the forests of Karnataka and Maharashtra. To the south of Mhadei is the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Bhagwan Mahavir National Park. The Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary lies between the Bhagwan Mahavir National Park on the north and the Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary to its south. This region typically contains evergreen, semi-evergreen and moist deciduous forest types. The evergreen forests are mainly seen at higher altitudes and along the river banks. **This report records that Goa has a persistent tiger presence with about three to five tigers.** (*See Cotigao-Mhadei Forest Complex of Goa – K. Ulhas Karanth, N. Samba Kumar, Ravishankar Parameshwaran, Arjun Srivathsa, Sushma Sharma, Wildlife Conservation Society – India and Centre for Wildlife Studies).*

3. This petition, instituted in the public interest, seeks directions to the respondents to notify Mhadei Wild Life Sanctuary and other areas as a "*tiger reserve*" under Chapter IV-B of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 (WLPA). In any case, the petitioner seeks directions from the respondents to take steps towards notifying Mhadei Wild Life Sanctuary (Mhadei WLS) and other areas as a "*tiger reserve*" under Chapter IV-B of the (WLPA). In addition, the petitioner seeks an order directing

respondent no.4 to set up Anti-Poaching Camps (APC) at strategic locations in the wildlife sanctuaries and national park of Goa to be staffed by Forest Guards/ Watchers around the clock to control instances of poaching effectively.

4. A map showing the location of Mhadei WLS in the western ghats landscape with the adjoining forests in Karnataka and Maharashtra is printed below for the convenience of reference. The map depicts "tiger corridors" critical for the tiger's survival in the western ghats.



(From page 3 of NTCA's REPORT ON "TIGER DEATHS IN MHADEI WILDLIFE SANCTUARY, GOA")

5. Beginning in 2011, the Central Government and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) have repeatedly pursued the issue of the State of Goa (State) notifying Mhadei WLS and certain other contiguous areas as a tiger reserve. In January 2020, the petitioner and other environmentalists also pursued this issue after a tigress and her three cubs died from poisoning in the Mhadei WLS. However, since the State has refused to budge, the petitioner has instituted the present petition seeking the above reliefs in the public interest.

6. Ms Alvares, learned counsel for the petitioner, submits that there was no justification for the State to ignore with impunity the Union Environment Minister's letter dated 28.06.2011 regards notifying Mhadei WLS and other contiguous areas as a tiger reserve. She submits that, in any case, NTCA's repeated recommendations starting from the communication dated 31.03.2016, were binding on the State Government under Section 38-V (1) of the WLPA. She submits that there was a breach of statutory duty on the part of the State Government in not notifying the tiger reserve despite repeated recommendations from the NTCA.

7. Ms Alvares submitted that the State forest authorities, with experts' aid, have already prepared proposals and plans for

notifying the tiger reserve. However, the State Board for Wildlife stalled such a proposal at least twice. She pointed out that four tigers died from poisoning in the Mhadei WLS due to such stalling. She pointed out that the expert committee appointed by the NTCA has reported on the mismanagement of protected areas in Goa. NTCA warned that further delay in notifying the tiger reserve and implementing a robust protection regime might lead to Goa becoming a "**death trap for the tigers"** dispersing in the western ghats landscape.

8. Ms Alvares submitted that the provisions of Section 38-V (1) of the WLPA were mandatory, and the State could not refuse or unreasonably delay notifying a tiger reserve after NTCA recommendations. She referred to the Central Empowered Committee's report and the Hon'ble Supreme Court's order in ***T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v/s Union of India & Others***[1]. She referred us to the guidelines issued by the NTCA on 15.10.2012 under Section 38-O of the WLPA. She also referred us to expert reports and other scientific literature. She referred to the legal provisions of WLPA and circulars issued by the NTCA on the subject. She pointed out how the delay was impairing the cause of tiger conservation in the Goa and the Western Ghats landscape. Based on all this, Ms Alvares urged that the Rule in

1 (2022) 9 SCC 306

this petition may be made absolute by issuing time-bound directions to the State and the NTCA.

9. Mr Raviraj Chodankar, learned counsel for the NTCA and the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, submitted that the NTCA had not only made *recommendations* vide communication dated 31.03.2016 read with the Office Memorandum dated 04.02.2020 and communication dated 29.09.2022 but further, that such communications spell out a *direction* as contemplated by Section 38-O of the WLPA. Based upon instructions he received, Mr Chodankar thus categorically submitted that the NTCA's communications to the State constituted not only the recommendations as contemplated by Section 38-V but also directions as contemplated by Section 38-O (2) of the WLPA.

10. Mr Chodankar submitted that directions under Section 38-O (2) are binding upon the State. Similarly, he presented that even the recommendation of the NTCA binds the State because Section 38-V (1) provides that the State Government "*shall*", on the recommendation of the NTCA, notify an area as a tiger reserve. Mr Chodankar, therefore, supported the petitioner and submitted that the State must not delay the notification of the

area as a tiger reserve and the dispatch of the proposal to enable the NTCA to take further steps in the matter.

11. Mr D. Pangam learned AG clarified that the State was not opposed to notifying the area as a tiger reserve. However, he submitted that the time was not right to make such a declaration, issue such a notification, or even forward any proposal to the NTCA. He pointed out that the State, in its affidavit, had nowhere stated that it did not wish to send a proposal to the NTCA or to notify the area as a tiger reserve. However, he pointed out that further studies were necessary, and the rights of the forest dwellers also needed to be settled entirely before such steps could be taken.

12. Mr Pangam submitted that, to date, the final declaration as contemplated by Section 26-A of the WLPA had not been issued in respect of five out of the six wildlife sanctuaries/national park in the State. He pointed out that the final notification under Section 26-A was issued only regarding Cotigao Wild Life Sanctuary and not others. He submitted that unless such final notifications/declarations under Section 26-A are issued, taking further steps to notify the said area as a tiger reserve would not be appropriate.

13. Mr Pangam submitted that the communications relied upon by the petitioner or referred to by Mr Chodankar were neither "*directions*" nor "*recommendations*" as contemplated under the WLPA. He submitted that the communications contained only "*suggestions or advice*." He offered that even otherwise, the provisions of Section 38-V (1) were only directory and not mandatory. He submitted that the mere use of the expression "*shall*" in Section 38-V (1) was insufficient to construe this provision as mandatory and not directory. He submitted that the Legislature had not provided for the consequences of a State Government rejecting NTCA's recommendation. Therefore, the provisions of Section 38-V (1) must be construed as directory and not mandatory. He relied on ***State of UP v/s Manbodhan Lal Srivastava***[2], ***Kailash v/s Nanhku and Others***[3] and ***M/s. B. P. Khemka Pvt. Ltd. v/s Birendra Kumar Bhowmick and Another***[4] to support his contention that the provisions of Section 38-V (1) were not mandatory but were only directory.

14. Mr Pangam submitted that none of the communications issued by the NTCA were shown to be backed by any resolutions of the NTCA. He handed in a bunch of NTCA minutes to submit that in none of the minutes except perhaps the minutes of 05.01.2022, was there any discussion on the issue declaring

2 1958 SCR 533

3 (2005) 4 SCC 480

4 (1987) 2 SCC 407

Mhadei WLS or other areas in Goa as a tiger reserve. He relied on the minutes and the NTCA Guidelines, 2012, to submit that the notification of a tiger reserve involves three stages, i.e. (i)Advise/Suggestion; (ii) In-principle approval (having effect of recommendation); and (iii) final approval (for the management plan proposed for the tiger reserve notified under Section 38-V). He submitted that the NTCA could not insist upon the State notifying a tiger reserve unless this procedure was followed. He submitted that the present petition was premature and must be dismissed.

15. Mr Pangam submitted that the State, in the past, experienced the unfortunate incident of revenge killing of four tigers. He pointed out that some of the forest settlers poisoned four tigers because their cattle were killed by one of the tigers. He submits that until and unless the rights of the forest dwellers are fully settled and notification, as contemplated by Section 26-A of the WLPA, was issued, it would not be appropriate to notify any area in Goa as a tiger reserve.

16. Mr Pangam finally submitted that the protected areas under the WLPA enjoy the same level of protection for all flora and fauna as in a tiger reserve. He offered that no additional protection was necessary for the tiger because all wild animals

deserved equal protection. He presents that the State, considering the death of four tigers, had taken additional measures to safeguard all wildlife. He, therefore, submitted that there was no prejudice due to the non-declaration of any area as a tiger reserve. He urged this as an additional reason to dismiss this petition.

17. For all the above reasons, Mr Pangam submitted that this petition may be dismissed.

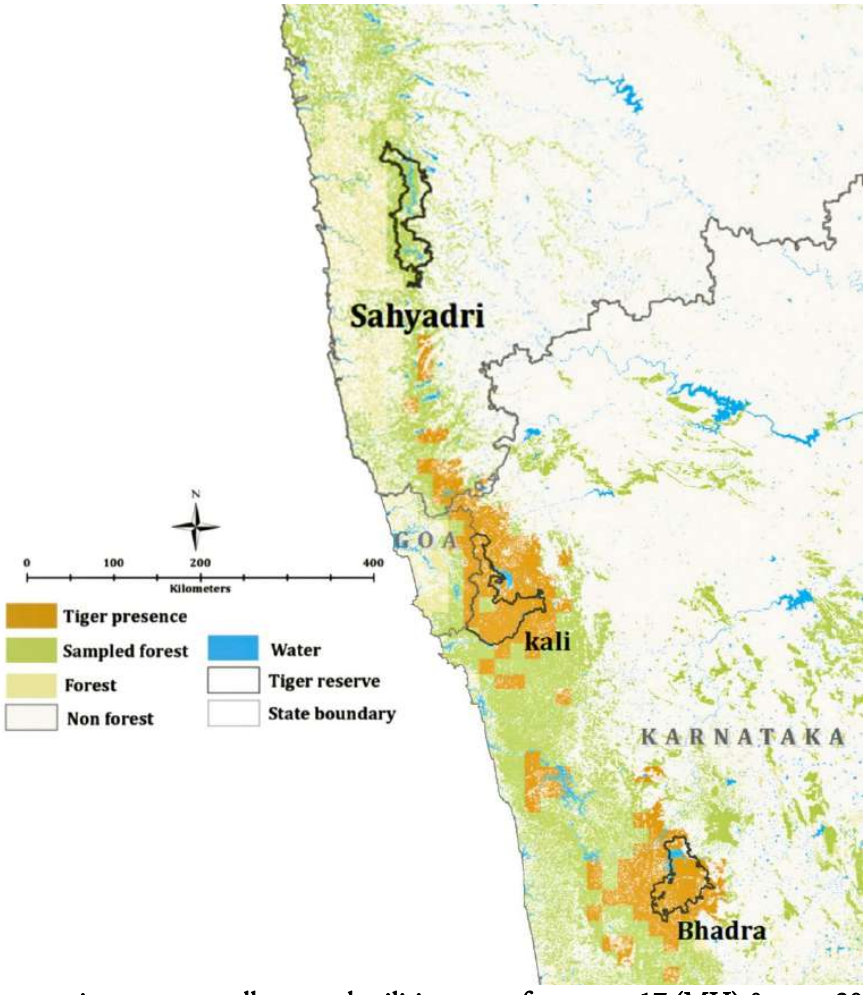
18. The rival contentions now fall for our determination.

19. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – India describes the tiger as a unique animal which plays a pivotal role in the health and diversity of an ecosystem. It is a top predator at the apex of the food chain. Therefore, the presence of tigers in the forest is an indicator of the well-being of the ecosystem. Protection of tigers in forests protects the habitats of several other species. Indirect benefits of preserving a tiger include several ecosystem services like protection of rivers and other water sources, prevention of soil erosion and improvement of ecological services like pollination, water table retention etc. Conversely, the absence of this top predator indicates that its ecosystem is not sufficiently protected. Tigers are variously described as

Keystone species, Flagship species, Indicator Species or Umbrella species.

20. A keystone species helps define an entire ecosystem. Without keystone species, the ecosystems would be dramatically different or cease to exist altogether. A flagship species acts as a symbol for an environmental habitat, movement, campaign or issue. They can be mascots for entire ecosystems. An indicator species is susceptible to environmental changes in an ecosystem. The NTCA Guidelines, 2012 describe the tiger as an Umbrella species because the tiger ensures viable populations of other wild animals (co-predators, prey) and forest, thereby ensuring ecological viability of the entire area or habitat. Thus, it becomes an ecological imperative to keep the core areas of tiger reserves inviolate for the survival of source populations of tigers and other wild animals.

21. The research and scientific reports produced by several Government and non-Government agencies establish the presence of the tiger in the protected areas in Goa. The NTCA maps indicating tiger presence not only within the boundaries of Goa but in the contiguous regions of the neighbouring States of Karnataka and Maharashtra are shown below for the convenience of reference:-



(A composite map manually created utilising maps from page 17 (MH) & page 20 (Goa & Karnataka) from the report of NTCA on Status of Tigers 2022)

22. The above map, together with the map in paragraph 4, depict how the Mhadei WLS and other contiguous areas constitute a tiger corridor for the movement of the tigers in the Western Ghats landscape. The NTCA Guidelines, 2012, explain the value of tiger corridors in Clause 7.4. This clause records that isolated populations of wild animals face the risk of extinction owing to insularisation. Habitat fragmentation adversely affects

wildlife due to decreased opportunities for movement, inter-breeding, etc. The Guidelines record that tiger corridors become crucial for maintaining the viability of tiger populations.

23. (*Sanderson et al., 2006, 2010; Wikramanayake et al., 2010*) report that to conserve a large, wide-ranging carnivore like the tiger; it is critical not only to maintain populations but also to enable the persistence of the species across much larger landscapes. To do this, it is essential to establish well-linked habitat networks where opportunities for dispersal and colonisation complement sites for the survival and reproduction of tigers. Among the critical global tiger conservation strategies are landscape-based approaches to sustain existing populations and attain recovery goals.

24. *Gubbi, Sanjay & Harish, N & Kolekar, Aparna & Poornesha, Heruru & Reddy, Vasanth & Mumtaz, Javeed & Madhusudan, M.. (2017)* report that Landscape-based approaches emphasise habitat connectivity as a means of enhancing gene flow, providing opportunity for dispersal, thereby increasing the persistence of populations, reducing the risk of inbreeding depression and local extinction, and finally, avoiding costly interventions such as translocation. The landscape-based approach has two key ingredients: first, it involves the identification of key source populations, and second, it involves

the consolidation and improvement of potential tiger habitat in and around these sites, as well as an enhancement of habitat connectivity within the larger landscape.

25. *Gubbi et al., (Providing more protected space for tigers Panthera tigris: A landscape conservation approach in the Western Ghats, southern India. (Oryx. 50.10.1017/ S0030605314000751) 2016); Chapron et al., 2008; Rathore et al., 2012; Mondol et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2013* report that the protected areas are a mainstay of tiger conservation but often lack connectivity, which is critical to ensuring both genetically and demographically viable populations. Enhancing the protected area network would provide protected space for more breeding tigresses and preserve landscape corridors, facilitating multi-directional connections for this far-ranging species. *Goodrich et al., 2013* reported that one of the solutions for ensuring viable tiger populations is to recover populations in a few core areas and link them through tiger-compatible landscapes. *Wikramanayake et al., 2004; Walston et al., 2010; Jhala et al., 2011* report that maintaining forest connectivity between tiger populations and adding new regions where existing populations can expand is vital for long-term persistence.

26. Thus, the tiger corridors are vital for the survival of the tiger. A tiger corridor is generally described as a stretch linking

tiger habitats, allowing tigers, prey and other wildlife to move. Without corridors, tiger habitat can become fragmented, and tiger populations isolated, leaving the tiger vulnerable to localised extinction. The consensus amongst researchers is that such tiger corridors not only ensure the free movement of tigers but the free intermixing of tiger populations, thereby strengthening the species' genetic health by preventing inbreeding caused by the fragmentation of habitats. The tiger corridors avoid the overcrowding of the protected areas by accommodating a growing population of cubs and tigers and allowing them to move away from the territory that adult tigers have already claimed; they also aid the survival of ageing tigers which naturally move outwards to avoid conflict with younger males.

27. Conscious of the importance of the Mhadei WLS and the tiger corridor that it provides, as early as 28.06.2011, Shri Jairam Ramesh, the Hon'ble Minister of State, Environment and Forest, Government of India, wrote to Shri Digambar Kamat, the then Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Goa requesting him to declare the Mhadei WLS situated in the Sattari Taluka of North Goa as a tiger reserve. (*Annexure 6 at page 58 of the petition paper book).*

28. The Union Environment Minister's letter dated 28.06.2011 is transcribed below for the convenience of reference:-

"JAIRAM RAMESH

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI - 110 003

28th June 2011

Dear Digambar

I am writing to you with the request for declaring the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary situated in Sattari Taluk of North Goa as a tiger reserve. There is evidence to show that tigers in Goa are not merely transient animals but are a resident population as well. Mhadei is a contiguous tiger landscape to Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka to its south-east and to Anshi Dandeli Tiger Reserve to its south which has around 35 tigers.

2. In a study carried out in 2008, the Wildlife Institute of India had pointed out that the protected areas of Goa and their contiguous forests in Karnataka and Maharashtra are possibly some of the best potential tiger habitats in the Western Ghats region and they are in need of protection.

3. I understand that there is considerable local community support for the creation of a tiger reserve and for wildlife conservation. By declaring Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary as a tiger reserve, we would also ensure the long-term protection of biodiversity-rich areas.

4. I urge you to give this idea the most serious consideration and submit a proposal to us so that we can take it forward quickly. You may also want to consider expanding the tiger reserve beyond the existing Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,
sd/-
Jairam Ramesh

Shri Digambar Kamat,
Chief Minister
Government of Goa"

29. For about five years, absolutely nothing was done by the State on the Union Environment Minister's letter dated 28.06.2011. After five years, the NTCA, by its communication dated 31.03.2016, wrote to the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) & Chief Wildlife Warden, Goa, about notifying Cotigao-Mhadei forest complex in Goa as a tiger reserve. This communication is vital to the issues raised in this petition, and therefore, the same is transcribed below for the convenience of reference.

"F.No. 1-20/2013-NTCA,
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change
National Tiger Conservation Authority

B-1 Wing, 2nd Floor
Paryavaran Bhavan CGO Complex
Lodhi Road New Delhi 110 003

Dated: 31.3.2016

To:
The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) &
Chief Wildlife Warden, Goa
Goa Forest Department
Gomantak Maratha Samay Building
S.V. Road,
Panaji Goa 403 001

Sub: Constitution of a New Tiger Reserve in the State of Goa — reg

Sir,

As you are aware the National Tiger Conservation Authority had conducted status of tigers co-predators and prey in India in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India and the State. As per the said exercise Cotigao-Madei Forest Complex of your state has recorded tiger presence meaning thereby having potential to head tiger population. This forest complex comprises of the protected areas covering an area of about 750 sq.mts having contiguity with the Kali Tiger Reserve and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka and other protected areas of Maharashtra state.

In view of the above it would be in the fitness of things to notify the said area as a tiger reserve. This would enable us to provide central assistance to the state to upgrade the protection status of the said landscape under the ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of project tiger (CSS-PT) besides fostering the existence agenda with local people in peripheral buffer area.

In this context I am directed to request you that a proposal in this regard may be sent to the Authority from the State Government as required under Section 38 (v) of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 to enable us to take further steps in this matter.

Yours faithfully
Sd/-
Dr. H.S. Negi
Inspector General of Forests (N)"

30. Acting on NTCA's above communication dated 31.03.2016, the Conservator of Forests, Goa, wrote to the

Deputy Conservator of Forests (Goa) on 19.04.2016 informing him about NTCA intimating that the protected area network of Goa in the western ghats are critical for tiger conservation in the region as these complexes are in continuity with the protected areas like Kali tiger reserve of Karnataka and protected areas in North (Maharashtra). Therefore, the protected network areas in the State of Goa can be notified as a tiger reserve. The Conservator of Forests directed the Deputy Conservator of Forests to demarcate the continuous forested habitat of Goa protected areas in the western ghats, excluding the human habitation/villages which could form the core of a future tiger reserve in Goa. The Conservator directed the Deputy Conservator to prepare the map showing linkages to the protected areas/tiger reserve of Karnataka and Maharashtra in consultation with the Deputy CF (working plan) and submit the same in time bound manner by the end of June 2016 or before.

31. On 20.06.2016, a meeting was convened upon the directions of the Conservator of Forests, Goa, attended by the three Deputy Conservators of Forests, three Assistant Conservators of Forests, the Chief Forest Surveyor and two Forest Surveyors. This meeting was specially convened for the constitution of the tiger reserve in the State of Goa. After deliberation at this meeting, the directions were issued to the Forest Officers to undertake the works of a tentative tiger reserve

map after compiling the relevant information and, based upon the same, to prepare a comprehensive proposal for the constitution of a new tiger reserve in the State of Goa. The minutes of this meeting are in Annexure -10 (*pages 64 and 65 of the paper book).*

32. The State Board for Wildlife, as reconstituted vide notification dated 05.08.2016, met on 12.10.2016 under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister, State of Goa. The Hon'ble Minister for Forests, Panchayats and Environment & Vice Chairperson was also present. In this meeting, under Agenda 3.7 – the subject of the Constitution of a tiger reserve in Goa was considered. No objections were raised about the NTCA's recommendation for the constitution of the tiger reserve. However, it was decided that the final proposal should be brought to the Board for approval before it is sent to NTCA for consideration.

33. By communication dated 13.12.2016, the Deputy Conservator of Forests (North) Division forwarded to the Deputy Conservator of Forests, Working Plan Division "*the proposed tiger reserve plan for Madei Wildlife Sanctuary and Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park, Mollem showing the location of all habitats, all weather roads, large habitations excluded from the proposed tiger reserve and household*

particulars inside & outside the proposed tiger reserve" for information and necessary action. To this communication was attached the plan showing the proposed tiger reserve area in North Goa Division along with road network and human habitation (*Annexure-12 on pages 68 and 69 of the paper book*).

34. The Petitioner has also placed on record the steps taken by the Forest Officers and other experts in the context of the constitution of a tiger reserve in Goa. This includes tour notes of Dr Debabrata Swain, ADG (PT) & MS (NTCA) in Goa and Karnataka. This note discusses the extensive consultations the Member Secretary of NTCA held with high-level forest officials in the State of Goa and Karnataka. Several directions were also issued concerning this protected area. This tour note speaks about camera trap photographs of tigers in the area. This note also records the PCCF, Goa, informing the Member Secretary of NTCA that the Government of Goa is considering constituting Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park, Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary in the western ghats as a proposed tiger reserve. The note records that the PCCF, Goa, was requested to submit a proposal for constituting a tiger reserve as soon as possible and that the proposal would be considered favourably by the NTCA. (*See Annexure -13 on pages 70-71 of the paper book).*

35. The Petitioner has placed on record a short report on rapid field surveys carried out by the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore, in association with the Goa Forest Department between January 20 and 26, 2016, in five protected areas of Goa to evaluate habitat status, forest connectivity and status of the tiger and its prey species. This report was prepared by **Dr A. J. T. Johnsingh** – Ex-Dean, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun, Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore; WWF – India and Corbett Foundation, Dikhuli, Uttarakhand. This report is titled "***Bringing back the Tiger to Goa"*** and was submitted to the Goa Forests Department on 05.05.2017 (*pages 229 to 252 of the paper book*).

36. Dr Johnsingh's report contains photographs, maps and details of protected areas in the State of Goa. The data collected during the survey for preparing this report included the occurrence of the tiger and its prey species based on evidence and direct sightings with information on the geographic location and habitat characteristics for direct and indirect (e.g., droppings and tracks) evidence. The report records that the surveyors saw a large scat near the Karnataka border, which could be that of a tiger. The report notes that the tiger should be ranging between Bhimgad WLS and Mhadei WLS as it seems to be an undisturbed tract of forest devoid of human habitation. As a result, here in the early summer of 2017, Goa Forest Department could get evidence of a

tiger, two tigresses and two cubs with the help of camera traps (Kerkar 2017).

37. Dr Johnsingh's report gives its findings, key conservation issues, suggestions, and conclusion. The report states that Mhadei WLS being closer to Bhimgad WLS, is in an advantageous position to have the first residential population of tigers in Goa. There are no mines within the sanctuary, and with the resettlement of Codaval village, Mhadei has the potential to become the primary core of the tiger reserve. Bhagawan Mahaveer WLS and NP have records of tiger sightings. Netravali WLS has reports of tiger sightings as the sanctuary has connectivity with the Kali tiger reserve in Karnataka. No mining occurs within the sanctuary limits. Therefore, if sufficient protection is given, this sanctuary can be a safe haven for large animals. Attempts should be made to establish a satellite core of around 100 sq. km within Netravali WLS. Cotigao WLS is connected to the Kali tiger reserve, so tigers reportedly range into the sanctuary. The report also adds that, "*It is likely that in the past the mining lobby exerted considerable influence against the establishment of a tiger reserve. We wish that this threat does not delay the establishment of the tiger reserve in Goa".*

38. Dr Johnsingh's report concludes by reference to the status of the tigers report, 2014, in which the population estimate of

tigers in Goa was five. The conclusion states that the situation is promising as the contiguous forests of Mhadei WLS, Netravali WLS, Bhagawan Mahaveer NP and WLS and Cotigao WLS of Goa, the reserved forests of Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra, Bhimgad WLS and Kali tiger reserve in Karnataka make this landscape a potential habitat for long term conservation of tiger and other associated species. Accordingly, the report recommends that the entire protected landscape of five existing protected areas (755 sq. km) should be declared as Tiger Reserve with a primary core of 150-200 in Mhadei WLS and a satellite core of 100 sq. km in Netravali WLS. Declaration of this tiger reserve will also protect the catchment areas of important rivers like Mhadei, Malapradha and Tillari. It will help to ensure continuous water availability for the three States of Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

39. The conclusion also flags that the priority in the entire landscape should be "*control of poaching of prey. Functional anti poaching camps are a must.....".* The report also recommends that generous voluntary resettlement packages be offered to the locals in the area. The long-term tiger conservation goal for Goa should be to have a breeding population of a minimum of ten adult tigers ranging not only in Mhadei but also in Netravali, Bhagwan Mahaveer and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuaries. The report ends with a pious hope " *We are sure that this is bound to happen*

if the present leadership in the forest department continues and such leadership is perpetuated for decades to come as conservation is a never ending endeavour".

40. The Petitioner has placed on record the minutes of the State Board for Wildlife meeting held on 16.12.2017 when the Board considered Dr Johnsingh's report. The meeting minutes at Agenda item No.4.5 record Member Secretary informed the Board Members that the "*proposed tiger reserve map is prepared after the Forest Department intensively studies the area in association with Wildlife expert Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, Retd. Scientist, WII."* After this, the Chairperson of the Board desired that he be furnished the details along with a study report on the socio-economic impact on locals residing in the fringe areas before the Board could discuss the same.

41. The relevant extract of the minutes of the State Board for Wildlife meeting held on 16.12.2017 (Annexure -14 on pages 72 and 73 of the paper book) is transcribed below for the convenience of reference.

"Agenda item: 4.5 Proposed Tiger Reserve:

Member Secretary informed about the proposed Tiger Reserve for which a map has been prepared comprising largely undisturbed areas with few human hamlets as core

zone adjoining the Kali Tiger Reserve and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka and Maharashtra in the North of Madei WLS, Bhagwan Mahaveer WLS & NP, Netravali and Cotigao WLS. He explained that the large human settlements and tourism areas have been proposed in the buffer zone in the existing PA. Member Secretary informed that the proposed Tiger Reserve map is prepared after the area is intensively studied by the Forest Department in association with Wildlife expert Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, Retd. Scientist, WII. Chairperson desired to furnish him details along with study report on socio-economic impact on locals residing in the fringe areas before discussing the same in the Board."

42. Thus, by December 2017, i.e. within about 18 months from the receipt of NTCA's recommendation dated 31.03.2016, at least officials of the Goa Forest Department prepared a map for the tiger reserve "*comprising largely undisturbed areas with few human hamlets as core zone adjoining the Kali Tiger Reserve and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka and Maharashtra in the North of Madei WLS, Bhagwan Mahaveer WLS & NP, Netravali and Cotigao WLS".* As the minutes disclose, the tiger reserve map was prepared after the area was "*intensively studied by the Forest Department in association with Wildlife expert Dr. A.J.T. Johnsingh, Retd. Scientist, WII.'* Most of the groundwork necessary to constitute a tiger reserve was complete by this date. However, no decision was taken by the State Board for Wildlife on 16.12.2017 because the Chairperson desired to be furnished details along with a study report on the socio-economic impact

on locals residing in the fringe areas before the matter could be discussed in the Board.

43. The Petitioner has then placed on record the office note dated 21.03.2018 (*Annexure -15 on pages 74 to 76 of the paper book*) prepared by the Deputy Conservator of Forests. This office note concerns the proposal for the constitution of a tiger reserve in the State of Goa. This office note refers to the State Board meeting held on 16.12.2017, in which the Chairperson, i.e. the Hon'ble Chief Minister, desired that he be furnished details about the proposal for the tiger reserve. The office note states: "*Upon the direction the detail of proposal is framed and submitted as below".*

44. The document dated 21.03.2018 gives the overview of the proposal for establishing a tiger reserve by explicitly referring to NTCA's communication dated 31.03.2016 by which the MoEF & CC, Government of India had urged the State to consider the constitution of a tiger reserve and to prepare a proposal in that regard. The document refers to the history of the project Tiger in India and its aim & objectives and key tiger habitats. This includes the western ghats landscape complex comprising Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa, with about 776 tigers. The details of tiger density extent and population block within

the western ghat landscape were placed separately in the file on page 4/c.

45. The document dated 21.03.2018 records that the entire stretch of the protected area network in Goa exists along the western Ghats. Due to better protection, habitat improvement and monitoring using technology such as camera traps, the Goa Forest Officials have confirmed tiger records in North-Eastern parts. The document refers to the action taken on NTCA's communication dated 31.03.2016 and documents about the discussions, workshops, preparation of maps and working plan. In particular, the document records that the map has been drawn to demarcate the contiguous forest habitat in the existing protected area in western Ghat as a core zone keeping main villages and human habitation outside this zone and placing them in the proposed buffer zone as far as possible.

46. A copy of the map prepared by DCF, a working plan showing the buffer zone, including eco-tourism zones in Mhadei, Bhagwan Mahaveer, Netravali and Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, in the proposed tiger reserve, was annexed to the document as Annexure-II. The document records that out of 745.18 sq. km of protected area, about 578.33 sq. km is proposed as the core zone and about 166.85 sq. km as the buffer zone. All this was indicated in the working plan prepared by DCF, which was annexed to the

document as Annexure – III. The details of the core and buffer area of the proposed tiger reserve (area-wise), along with the legal status, were shown in tabular format on page 7/C.

47. The document dated 21.03.2018 significantly records that the locations in the protected areas with large habitations have been left out (excluded) from the proposed tiger reserve. Only sites with smaller habitations have been included so that relocations could be minimum. The document concludes by noting that Central assistance of 100% would be provided for non-recurring expenditures and 50% for recurring on the notification of a tiger reserve.

48. Thus, even the document dated 21.03.2018 shows that the major steps concerning the notification of the tiger reserve were complete. All details as desired by the Chairperson of the State Wildlife Board were also duly furnished. Significantly, in demarcating the tiger reserve areas, care was taken as far as possible to ensure that human habitation areas were excluded from the core zone by placing them in the buffer zone to the extent possible. Several plans were prepared, including the core and buffer areas' locations. Still, from 2018 to date, the State Government avoided acting on the recommendation of the NTCA.

49. The Petitioner has also placed on record the NTCA document dated 02.12.2019 (Annexure -16 on pages 77 and 78 of the paper book), titled "***Connecting Tiger Populations for Long-term Conservation'***. This document has mapped out 32 major corridors across the country, including macro/landscape-level tiger corridors. Goa is included in Item No.2, the "*Sahyadri-Radhanagari-Goa'* corridor. Factually, even the State does not dispute the presence of tigers or the tiger corridor in Goa. The importance of protecting tiger corridors is already discussed earlier.

50. While the State Government was proceeding at a snail's pace, in January 2020, the national and local newspapers reported that four tigers were found dead in Mhadei WLS. The investigations ultimately suggested that the tigress and her three cubs died in the Mhadei WLS by consuming poisoned buffalo carcasses. A forest dweller poisoned the carcass because the tigress had killed his buffalo a couple of days earlier. This unfortunate incident could have been easily avoided if the State Government had acted with alacrity. While the state attempted to downplay this incident, the Central Government and the NTCA swung into action.

51. Mr Chodankar, learned counsel for the Central Government and the NTCA, placed on record an Office

Memorandum dated 04.02.2020 issued by the NTCA to the Principal Secretary (Forest), Government of Goa informing him that the requisite action as per the SOP and guidelines of NTCA had been taken in the case of death of a tigress with three cubs inside the Mhadei WLS. Further, a team had been constituted by the NTCA to inquire and facilitate the legal action involved in connection with the tiger deaths. This communication also states that the IGF, NTCA, RO, Bengaluru had conducted a supervisory visit on 28.01.2020 and suggested/assisted the future line of action to strengthen the measures in the Mhadei WLS. The action taken report (ATR) was also enclosed for kind information and necessary action by the Government of Goa.

52. The ATR records that as part of All India Tiger Estimation (AITE) – 2018, the Goa Forest Department carried out sign survey activities (Phase I) in May 2018 in potential tiger-bearing areas, including the Mhadei WLS. The survey confirmed the presence of tigers in Mhadei WLS. The ATR records that the preliminary investigation by the Goa Forest Department had revealed that all four tigers had died due to consumption of poisoned buffalo meat. Per the accused's statement, they poisoned the buffalo to kill the tigers and avenge their buffaloes' loss.

53. The ATR refers to IGF's supervisory visit to the protected areas. This report suggested several steps, including strict adherence to the SOPs issued by NTCA in respect of matters involving Tigers and Leopards; expeditious settlement of rights of the forest dwellers; implementation of M-StriPES Scheme; placing of additional camera traps; posting of full-time veterinary officers; timely payment of compensation in cases of human-animal conflicts. The ATR records that the Mhadei WLS has been managed for two decades without any management plan. Therefore, the management plan must be completed at the earliest and on a priority basis. The ATR finally urges that the proposal to declare a tiger reserve should be expedited.

54. The two-member expert committee of NTCA to probe into the death of four tigers in the Mhadei WLS was accompanied on a field visit by the High Ranking Officials of the Goa Forest Department. The report of this committee is quite detailed and exhaustive (*See Annexure-19 - pages 87 to 101 of the paper book).* The plan at paragraph 5 of this Judgment and Order is from this report. The expert committee made as many as twenty-three observations and eighteen recommendations.

55. The NTCA expert committee observed that the unfortunate death of four tigers revealed that not all was not well with the management of Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary. The report quotes some wildlife activists who stated that the presence of tigers in this area was well-known and documented. However,

over the years, the Forest Department failed to take any serious and sincere steps to protect and conserve tigers. The expert committee observed no proper protection mechanism inside the sanctuary, like a network of well-connected Anti-Poaching Camps (APC) at strategic locations staffed by Forest Guard/Watchers around the clock, a common feature of well-managed PA/Tiger Reserve. The expert committee observed a high probability that the tigers, their prey base and other flora and fauna might be subjected to varying degrees of poaching pressure. Still, there was no way to know unless a good protection and information network was put in place.

56. The NTCA expert committee reported that, unfortunately, even after more than two decades since Mhadei WLS was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary, it was managed on a completely ad-hoc basis as no management plan existed for such an important sanctuary of Western Ghat. The expert committee observed, "*It gives an impression that wildlife management appears to be a subject which is of least priority for the Goa Forest Department*."

57. The expert committee observed that there had been several instances of cattle depredation by the tigers and leopards in the past. Still, hardly any compensation was paid by the Forest Department officials to the victims. The representatives of the local Dhangar community also alleged that neither the forest

department nor other Government Departments conducted any awareness about human-wildlife conflicts and government schemes for payment of compensation. Similarly, no systematic efforts have been made to estimate the tiger population in the sanctuary using camera trap-based monitoring protocols. The expert committee reported that because only opportunistic camera trapping was done by the Forest Department inside the sanctuary without a designed survey protocol, it was highly possible that the projected tiger population size of Goa may be an understatement.

58. The NTCA expert committee also observed that the protected areas of Goa (Mhadei WLS and Mollem WLS) are part of the Western Ghats landscape complex, with the unique distinction of having the world's largest tiger population. This landscape has several interconnected tiger reserves and protected areas. According to the Status of Tigers in India, 2014 report, Goa has a persistent tiger presence with a conservative estimate of 3-5 tigers. Still, this landscape has the potential to serve as a home for breeding tigers and to increase overall tiger population numbers by providing targeted management inputs. The expert committee strongly recommended that the Protected Areas of Goa and the protected forests of Karnataka should be brought under Tiger Reserve at the earliest to facilitate tiger recovery and conserve this biodiversity hot-spot's rich biodiversity. The expert

committee reported that this would enhance the value of Western Ghats as a World Heritage Site.

59. The NTCA expert committee also noted that the narrow forest connectivity of the Western Ghats ridge between Goa and Maharashtra is vital in facilitating contiguous tiger occupancy within this landscape. Without up-grading the legal status of Goa's Protected Areas to that of tiger reserves and putting in place a robust protection regime, "**the State may become death trap for tigers dispersing in this landscape**".

60. The NTCA expert committee noted with regret that the issue of declaring Mhadei WLS as a tiger reserve is a long pending one, with the Central Government initiating steps in 2012. The expert committee also referred to the estimates of the economic valuation of the tiger reserves. The research findings indicate that the annual benefits derived from tiger reserves ranged from USD 128 million to 271 million. The expert committee observed that contrary to the claims of certain vested interests that the declaration of tiger reserves will stall the development of the State, an economic evaluation study by NTCA and the Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) establishes that tiger reserves make a significant contribution to the State economy by providing various ecosystem services.

61. The NTCA expert committee finally observed that it was the right time not only for the Mhadei WLS in the State of Goa but to submit proposals for the declaration of WLS for Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary and Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary as Tiger Reserves. This move will secure the habitat for mega carnivores and the associated floral & faunal diversity at the State level and contribute towards conserving the Western Ghats, a biodiversity hot-spot and a 'World Heritage Site'."

62. The NTCA's expert committee report then proceeded to make almost eighteen recommendations, the first of which was to declare the Mhadei WLS as a tiger reserve which would provide the much-needed access to technical, financial and monitoring support from NTCA to safeguard the conservation values of the sanctuary. The expert committee recommended setting up Anti-poaching Camps and delineation of sanctuary boundaries, a systematic survey of the sanctuary, constituting State level Task Force, Deployment of M-StrIPES, Developing informer network, setting up of wireless network, Appointment of dedicated Forest Settlement Officer, Capacity Building, Awareness campaigns, simplifying compensation payment mechanism, preparation of Management plan, Shifting headquarter of Wildlife Division, Posting young, energetic and

trained forest officers for the sanctuary, State level monitoring of tigers and, Planning voluntary village relocation, etc.

63. Though the expert committee report was furnished to the State Government and the officers of the Goa Forest Department, the record bears out that hardly any steps based upon the observations or recommendations were initiated. The unfortunate death of four tigers in the Mhadei WLS was treated as some one-off incident without appreciating the severe implications. Even three years after the submission of this detailed report by the NTCA's expert committee, the proposal for notifying the tiger reserve moved no further. We say nothing further!

64. In 2021-22, an issue arose about doubling the stretch of the railway line from Castlerock Karnataka to Kulem in Goa (Part of Phase II of the project from Tinaighat to Vasco). The Central Empowered Committee constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court made its report no.6/2021 in Application No.1440 in Writ Petition (C) No.202/1995 before the Hon'ble Supreme Court by the petitioner-Goa Foundation. This report, inter alia, refers to the status of Kali Tiger Reserve (KTR), comprising two important protected areas of the region Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary (DWS), and Anshi National Park (ANP), which are contiguous. The area of KTR is 1101.51 sq. km. and is bounded by the protected areas

of Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS) and Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary (BMWS) with wildlife-rich regions of Supa backwaters and forests of Tinaighat Range of Haliyal Division. The forest area of Castlerock Range holds a sizeable population of tigers (25 in 2020). It is also an important tiger corridor in the Central Western Ghats connecting the tiger habitats in Karnataka, Goa and Southern Maharashtra. The camera trap records show that tigers from Bhadra Tiger Reserve, Kali Tiger Reserve, and Sahyadri Tiger Reserve (STR) actively use this corridor for dispersal.

65. On 09.05.2022, Hon'ble Supreme Court disposed of Goa Foundation's above application based upon the CEC report. This order is reported in *T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v/s. Union of India (supra)*. In para 22 and 26 of this order, there is a direct reference to areas in Goa forming a tiger corridor for the region. Para 22 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court Order reads as follows:-

> "***22. The landscape in which the railway line is proposed to pass is an important tiger corridor, connecting the three States of Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra****. The report prepared by NTCA regarding the viability of such a railway line is only for the Karnataka part of the project. No such report has been prepared for the Goa part. The Standing Committee of NBWL ought to have sought for a report from NTCA on the Goa part of the project before granting approval for the doubling of the railway line between*

> *Castlerock to Kulem* ***in view of the fact that it is an important tiger corridor where instances of killing of tigers have been reported****. We find merit in the recommendations made by CEC regarding the necessity of taking into account the actual loss of the wildlife habitat by the construction activity for the doubling of the railway line for which heavy machinery would have to be moved and crusher units will have to be established for dumping construction material."*
>
> ***(Emphasis supplied)***

66. Thus, even the Hon'ble Supreme Court has taken cognisance of the fact that the Mhadei WLS and areas contiguous to it constitute a vital tiger corridor where instances of killing of tigers have been reported. The Court has also taken cognisance that this important tiger corridor connects three States: Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

67. Mr Chodankar, learned counsel for the Central Government and NTCA, also placed on record a communication dated 29.09.2022 addressed by NTCA to the Chief Wildlife Warden, Government of Goa, on the declaration of a tiger reserve in Goa. This communication reads as follows:-

"NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

(Statutory Body under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India)

F. No. 1-12/2013-NTCA

New Delhi, September 29th 2022

To,

The Chief Wildlife Warden,
Government of Goa

Sub: Declaration of Tiger Reserve in Goa - reg.

Sir,

I am directed to enclose herewith a copy of email received from Brunila De Souza, Nigvaddo, Saligao, Goa regarding the presence of tigers in Goa and the need for constituting tiger reserve, for your kind information.

In 2020, in the aftermath of death of a tigress and three cubs inside the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, this Authority had requested the State to speed up the process of notifying Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary as tiger reserve (copy enclosed).

Considering the strategic location of Goa's Protected Areas (PA) within the Western Ghat landscape and the importance of these PAs in ensuring long-term conservation of tigers, it is requested that necessary steps may be initiated for bringing the area under the ambit of NTCA.

Endi: As above.

Yours faithfully,
Sd/-
(Rajendra G. Garawad)
Deputy Inspector General (NTCA)
Email: dig2-ntca@nic.in
Tel. (EPABX): + 91 11 24367837-39
FAX: +91 11 24367836

Copy to: IGF, NTCA, Regional office (Southern Zone), Bengaluru, Karnataka."

68. The conspectus of the documents, reports, communications, minutes, office notes, maps, plans, etc., establish the presence of tigers in Mhadei WLS and its contiguous areas. Further, due to the contiguity of this area with the wildlife sanctuaries and tiger reserves in Karnataka and Maharashtra, this area is a vital tiger corridor critical for the conservation and protection of the tiger. Based upon recommendations of the NTCA, at least the Goa State Forest Officials have already prepared detailed proposals and plans to constitute the tiger reserve. But the State continues to steadfastly avoid notifying the tiger reserve.

69. The Goa State Wildlife Board minutes dated 12.10.2016 record that an area of 590 square kilometres is relatively free of any human habitation and has now been identified as the likely area for the core zone of the proposed tiger reserve. The material on record shows that regions with significant habitation were excluded from the proposed tiger reserve. Dr Johnsingh's report, while pointing out the necessity of constituting a tiger reserve at the earliest, refers to the mining lobby in Goa exerting considerable influence against establishing a tiger reserve. This report concludes by observing that the declaration of this tiger

reserve will protect catchment areas of important rivers like Mhadei, Malaprabha and Tillari. This will also help to ensure continuous water availability for the three States of Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

70. The State Board of Wildlife duly considered all such material in its meeting on 16.12.2017. However, no decision was taken at this meeting because the Chairperson requested a study of socioeconomic impacts on locals. Even this was provided to the Chairperson and the State Board, as evidenced by the Deputy Conservator of Forest note dated 21.03.2018. This document gives details of all particulars of the proposed tiger reserve, including the socio-economic impact on locals residing in contiguous areas. This document refers to the working plan showing core and buffer zones and confirms that high-habitation regions have been excluded from the tiger reserve. Despite all this material, the State Government or the State Board for Wildlife avoided taking any decision on the issue of tiger reserve.

71. After the unfortunate death of four tigers in the Mhadei WLS in January 2020, it was expected by all concerned that the area would be notified as a tiger reserve to ensure a more significant level of protection for the tiger and the tiger corridor. However, even this incident was sought to be trivialised and downplayed. The recommendations made by the NTCA through

its ATR or the recommendations in the NTCA's two-member expert committee report were mostly ignored. All recommendations strongly urged the State Government to notify this area as a tiger reserve at the earliest, failing which the State of Goa may become a death trap for tigers dispersing in this landscape. Even these desperate warnings of the NTCA's expert committee were insufficient to move the State Government into action. Therefore, the NTCA, as late as 29.09.2022, once again urged the Goa Government to speed up the process of notifying Mhadei WLS and areas contiguous to it as a tiger reserve.

72. Possibly having regard to such voluminous material and the strong recommendations of the NTCA, the learned AG submitted that the State was not opposed to notifying the area as a tiger reserve. Still, the State believed such a notification could be issued only after the rights and claims of all the forest dwellers in the protected areas were determined and settled. Learned AG submitted that until and unless final notifications under Section 26-A of the WLPA were issued regarding all the areas within the WLS and National Parks, the time was not opportune to notify this area as a tiger reserve. For reasons discussed later, this contention or excuse cannot be accepted.

73. Based on the above factual background and given the rival contentions, the first point to be determined is whether the

NTCA's communication dated31.03.2016, O.M. dated 04.02.2020, action taken report (ATR) dated 04.02.2020, NTCA's expert committee report (pages 87 to 101 of the paper book) and NTCA's communication dated 29.09.2022 amount to "recommendations" under Section 38-V(1) of the WLPA?

74. Section 38-V (1) of the WLPA provides that the State Government shall, "*on the recommendation of the Tiger Conservation Authority*", notify an area as a tiger reserve. WLPA neither defines the expression "*recommendation*" nor prescribes any particular form or format in which the NTCA could make a recommendation under Section 38-V (1) of WLPA. Therefore, we could consider the natural meaning of the expression "*recommendation*", bearing in mind the context of its setting in the statutory scheme. This is a permissible exercise in statutory interpretation.

75. In ***Commissioner of Income Tax, West Bengal, Calcutta v/s. Raja Benoy Kumar Sahas Roy***[5] the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that when a word is not defined in the Act itself, it is permissible to refer to dictionaries to find out the general sense in which that word is understood in common parlance. However, in selecting one out of the word's various meanings, regard must always be had to the context as it is a fundamental rule that the

5 *AIR 1957, 768*

meanings of words and expressions used in an Act must take their colour from the context in which they appear. (*See also Ramnarayan v/s. State of UP*[6]). Therefore, reference to some well-known dictionaries and the decisions on the scope of the expression "*recommendation*" would not be out of place.

76. The Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Indian Edition) gives the following meaning for the expressions "*recommend*" and "*recommendation*":

> **Recommend** – V. **1** put forward with approval as being suitable for a purpose or role, » advise as a course of action. » advise to do Something. **2** make appealing or desirable, **3** (**recommend someone/thing to**) archaic commend or entrust someone or something to. - DERIVATIVES **recommendable** adj, **recommendatory** adj. **Recommender**

77. The Cambridge Dictionary offers the following meanings for "*recommendation*":

> **a suggestion that something is good or suitable for a particular purpose or Job:**

78. In P. Ramanatha Aiyar's Law Lexicon, the word "*recommendation*" means "a statement expressing commendation or a message of this nature or suggests fit."

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6 *AIR 1957 SC 18*

79. In ***Union of India v/s. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India***[7] the Delhi High Court has explained the expression "*recommend*" as defined in the Webster's Dictionary means, "*to advise, to counsel, as recommend that something be done, to speak favourably as suited for some use, function, position etc., to make acceptable or pleasing to suggest, to counsel a course of action and leave its acceptance to that person*." "*Recommend*" implies a favourable or favouring report and precludes an unfavourable or opposing report. Thus "*recommend*" is to present one's advise or choice or as having one's approval and involves the idea that another has the final decision.

80. The United States Court of Appeal, Third Circuit*, in* ***People of Virgin Islands V. Price, CA, expressed a similar opinion in Virgin Islands, 181 Federal Reports 2d 394, 396.*** The Court held that the word "*recommend*" has to be seen in the context in which it was suggested by the Standing Committee, conveying the intention of the Legislature to mean "*advise*", "*suggest*" and "*counsel*".

81. Crucial on this subject is the decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***V. M. Kurian v/s. State of Kerala & Others***[8], wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court was considering the scope of the expression "*recommendation*" in Rule 5 of the Kerala

7 *1998 (46) DRJ*

8 *(2001) 4 SCC 215*

Building Rules, which empowered the Government to exempt certain buildings from applying the said rules. The Court held that the perusal of Rule 5 shows that an application for exemption from the provisions of the Rules was required to be processed through GCDA and the Chief Town Planner. The Rule further requires that the application be forwarded to the State Government along with the specific recommendations of GCDA and the Chief Town Planner. The question, therefore, that arose for consideration was the scope of the expression *recommendation* in the context of Rule 5. The Court noted that the Rules or the Statute provided no statutory definition. Therefore, the Court accepted the dictionary meaning of the word *"recommend*," i.e., "*to advise*", "*to praise or commend*".

82. The Court noted that there was no statutory definition of "*recommendation*" in the Rules. Therefore, the meaning of the word has to be understood in the context of the provisions of the Rules and the object behind such Rules. Since the Rules concerned regulation and construction of a building in an urban area, the object of such rules was the maintenance of public safety and convenience. Thus, the meaning of the word "*recommend*", when read in the context of the Rules, shows that it means "*giving of a favourable report opposed to an unfavourable one*".

83. Even otherwise, NTCA's communications contain proper recommendations, not merely suggestions or advice regarding notifying the Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve. Repeatedly the NTCA exhorted the State Government to notify the tiger reserve expeditiously to arrest further degradation of the tiger and tiger habitat. The NTCA expert committee went to the extent of saying that the delay in notifying might as well render the Goan sanctuaries a death trap for the tigers accessing the well-defined tiger corridor. These strong observations were made after the State Government virtually ignored repeated NTCA and the Central Government recommendations. This led to the unfortunate death of 4 tigers in Mhadei WLS in January 2020.

84. Thus, it is clear that the NTCA's communication dated 31.03.2016, O.M. dated 04.02.2020, action taken report (ATR) dated 04.02.2020, NTCA's expert committee report (*pages 87 to 101 of the paper book*) and NTCA's communication dated 29.09.2022 amount to a recommendation as contemplated by Section 38-V (1) of the WLPA.

85. The second point which arises for consideration is whether the provisions of Section 38-V (1) of WLPA, which provides that the State Government shall, on the recommendation of the NTCA, notify an area as a tiger reserve, is mandatory or only directory?

86. In ***Anant H. Ulahalkar & Anr v/s. Chief Election Commissioner & Ors.***[9], the Full Bench of this Court, considered in some detail the tests to determine whether a legislative provision is mandatory or directory. The use of expressions like "*shall*" or "*may*" are not conclusive, and regard must be had to the true intent of the legislation. However, the use of expressions like "*shall*", "*should*", or "*must*" by the legislature, at least *prima facie*, indicates mandatory nature. Similarly, using expressions like "*may*" or "*as nearly as may be*" by the legislature, at least *prima facie,* reveals *directory* nature. This decision was affirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Shankar Raghunath Devre (Patil) Vs State of Maharashtra and others*** - [(2019) 3 SCC 220].

87. In ***Khub Chand and others Vs State of Rajasthan and others*** - AIR 1967 SC 1074, ***State (NCT of Delhi) Vs Sanjay (2014) 9 SCC 772,*** and ***State of U.P. vs. Babu Ram Upadhya, AIR 1961 SC 751,*** the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that the term "shall" in its ordinary significance is mandatory and the court shall ordinarily give that interpretation to that term unless such an interpretation leads to some absurd or inconvenient consequence or bring it in variance with the intent of the legislature, to be collected from other parts of the Act. The Court has held that whether a statute is mandatory or directory depends upon the Legislation's language and phraseology, the Legislature's

9 *[(2017) 1 Mh. L.J. 431]*

intention and the nature, design, and consequences which would follow from construing it one way or another.

88. In *Manbodhan Lal Srivastava* (supra), *M/s B. P. Khemka* (supra) and *Kailash Vs Nankhu* (supra), relied upon by the learned AG, the Hon'ble Supreme Court formulated no different principles. However, the Hon'ble Supreme Court did hold that procedural provision or beneficial legislation must not ordinarily be construed as mandatory unless compelled by expression and specific language of the statute. These decisions also hold that one of the tests for determining whether a provision is mandatory or directory is whether the Legislature has provided any consequences for disobedience.

89. The learned AG emphasised that no civil or penal consequences were provided should the State Government defy or delay the implementation of NTCA's recommendations. He was at pains to submit that once the Legislature provided no such consequences, Section 38-V (1) should not be construed as mandatory. According to us, this cannot be the sole factor for construing Section 38-V (1) as directory. In ***Surjeet Singh Bhamra Vs Bank of India and others***[10] ***and Balwant Singh Vs Anand Kumar Sharma***[11]***,*** the Hon'ble Supreme Court has held that the fact that no consequences of non-compliance are stated

10 *(2016) 4 SCC 204*
11 *(2003) 3 SCC 433*

in the statute has been considered as a factor tending towards a directory construction. But this is only an element to be considered and is by no means conclusive.

90. Section 38-V (1) uses the expression "*shall*". Therefore, going by the precedents, this would at least prima facie indicate a mandate. No absurd or inconvenient consequence would result from construing this provision as mandatory. Instead, a problematic consequence might ensue by construing this provision as directory because then it would be open to the State Government to defy the recommendation of an expert, high-powered central body constituted by Parliamentary Legislation for the specific purpose of adequate protection of the tiger and tiger habitat in India.

91. If each State Government must be given the absolute discretion to notify or not to notify a tiger reserve, notwithstanding the strong recommendation of NTCA, the protection of the tiger, our national animal, and its habitat would be rendered a casualty. The object of the WLPA is to protect wild animals to ensure the ecological and environmental security of the country. The 2006 amendment by which the NTCA was constituted aimed to strengthen project tiger for conserving endangered tigers and tiger habitats. Therefore, even the

legislative object and NTCA's statutory position would not support a directory construction.

92. The NTCA is a high-powered central body constituted under the Parliamentary statute. This is Chaired by Union Environment Minister and Vice Chaired by the Minister of State Environment. Three members of the Parliament, eight experts or professionals having prescribed qualifications and experience in the conservation of wildlife and the welfare of the people living in tiger reserves (out of which two shall be from the field of tribal development) are its members. Besides, an environment Secretary, Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj are the members of NTCA. The Director General of Forests, Director Wild Life Preservation, six Chief Wild Life Wardens from the tiger reserve States, an officer not below the rank of Joint Secretary and a Legislative Counsel from the Ministry of Law and Justice are also members of the NTCA. An officer not below the level of Inspector-General for Forests having at least ten years of experience in a tiger reserve or wildlife management is the Member Secretary of the NTCA. Sweeping powers have been conferred, and critical functions have been assigned to the NTCA under Section 38-O of the WLPA.

93. Therefore, to hold that Section 38-V (1) is only a directory so that the State Government can brush aside the recommendation of the NTCA would be contrary to the language and phraseology of the provision, the intention of the Legislature and the nature, design and consequences which would follow from construing the same as directory. The vesting of absolute discretion in the State Government to unreasonably delay or even refuse to notify a tiger reserve despite recommendations from the expert high-powered central body like NTCA, even with no cogent reasons, would spell doom for the cause of tiger protection. The cause of tiger protection would then be a casualty. This Court cannot blink at the reality that often at the State level, regional, parochial, anthropomorphic, and times, even narrow political considerations would prevail over the more significant national interests involved in conserving and protecting the tiger and the tiger habitat.

94. Regards the absence of consequences, Section 38-O (2) in Chapter IV-B provides that the directions issued by the NTCA in the context of the conservation of tiger or tiger reserves are binding. However, this provision, or no other provision in WLPA, provides for consequences should the State Government embark upon a misadventure of defying such direction. Yet even the learned AG does not dispute that the provisions of Section 38-O (2) are mandatory.

95. Similarly, Section 38-W, which also forms part of Chapter IV-B of WLPA, provides that no alteration in the boundaries of a tiger reserve shall be made except on the recommendation of NTCA and approval of NBWL. Further, no State Government is permitted to denotify a tiger reserve except in the public interest with the approval of NTCA and the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). This section uses the expression "shall" but does not provide for any consequences should the State Government decide to defy this provision and proceed to alter the boundaries of a tiger reserve or even denotify a tiger reserve. Yet, there can be no doubt that Section 38-W is mandatory, and the State is injuncted from acting otherwise.

96. Ms Alvares referred to ***Ajay Dubey Vs NTCA***[12] and ***Centre for Environment Law WWF-India Vs Union of India***[13] to point out how the Hon'ble Supreme Court has interpreted the expression "*shall*" appearing in WLPA. In the context of Section 38-V (3) of WLPA, the Court directed that the respective State Governments prepare a tiger conservation plan within six months and submit the same to NTCA for approval where the Legislature had used the expression "*shall*" in the said provision. Similarly, the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that under Section 33-A of WLPA, the Chief Wild Life Warden was mandated to take such measures in such manner as may be prescribed for immunisation

12 *(2012) SCC OnLine SC 875*

13 *(1998) 6 SCC 483*

against communicable diseases of the live-stock kept in or within five kilometres of a sanctuary. Again both these sections use the expression "*shall*" but provided no consequences for disobedience.

97. The learned AG submitted that Section 38-O (2) empowers the NTCA to issue binding directions. He proposed that the Legislature could have easily used the expression "*directions*" in Section 38-V (1) if it intended the provisions to be mandatory. He submitted that the fact that the Legislature has consciously not used this expression means that the provisions of Section 38-V (1) are only directory and not mandatory. We cannot agree for the reasons discussed hereafter.

98. A careful reading of Section 38-O (2) provision clarifies that the directions referred to therein are general and broad-based for protecting tiger or tiger reserves. Instead, the recommendations contemplated under Section 38-V (1) of WLPA are in the specific context of the State Government notifying a tiger reserve. The legislature was undoubtedly conscious of the distinction between a direction and a recommendation. Yet, the legislature used the expression "recommendation" but clarified that even such a recommendation from a high-powered expert body like the NTCA would oblige the State Government to notify a tiger reserve. The Parliament did not possibly conceive of a situation where a State Government

would defy the recommendation of NCTA and insist upon reading the expression “shall” as “may”.

99. Incidentally, we must add that even if the provision is directory, it does not mean the State has a licence to openly flout the same without rhyme, reason, or legitimate cause. Substantial compliance is usually expected. At least weighty reasons for incomplete compliance or non-compliance are expected. As discussed later, the State Government's only reason for defying the NTCA is that the rights and claims of the forest dwellers in some of the protected areas of the State of Goa are yet to be settled. This reason, in our opinion, is unacceptable. Such a reason neither constitutes a legal impediment nor a lawful excuse for the State Government to evade notifying the tiger reserve. Besides, by putting forth such cause, the State Government is trying to draw mileage out of its abject failure to adhere to the statutorily prescribed timeline in Section 25-A of the WLPA and the judicial directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in Writ Petition No.337/1995.

100. For all the above reasons, we hold that the provisions of Section 38-V (1) of WLPA are mandatory. The State Government was bound to notify Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve, given the recommendations of the NTCA on this issue.

101. The third point which arises for determination is whether, for want of final notification under Section 26-A of the WLPA or due to non-settlement of rights and claims of forest dwellers, can the State Government refuse or unreasonably delay the notification of the tiger reserve?

102. In the affidavit filed by Santosh Kumar, Chief Wild Life Warden, on behalf of the State Government, no contention is raised that the State Government is barred or disabled from notifying Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve because the State Government is yet to settle the rights and claims of the forest dwellers in the protected area of Goa. The only contention in paras 8 and 10 of the affidavit is that final notification under Section 26-A of the WLPA is yet to be issued in cases of Bhagwan Mahaveer, Mhadei WLS (partly), Netravali WLS (partly). Therefore, it is urged that proposing these areas as tiger reserves without settlement of rights and claims of the forest dwellers "*may be a premature, and will adversely affect larger public interest and further aggravate man-tiger conflict.*"

103. Further, in paragraph 10, affiant states that the proposal for notifying tiger reserve in any one of the wildlife sanctuaries "*without first issuing a final notification under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 would have adverse impact on the larger public as well as aggravate the human-tiger conflict.*' Thus, at

least in the State's return, there is no case pleaded that the State Government is barred or disabled from notifying a tiger reserve unless a final notification under Section 26-A of the WLPA is issued in cases of its wildlife sanctuaries which may have part of the tiger reserve. In short, at least in its return, the State does not contend that issuing final notification under Section 26-A of the WLPA is a sine qua non for declaring the area a tiger reserve.

104. On the careful analysis of the scheme of WLPA, it is clear that there is no bar or a legal impediment to notify a protected area as a tiger reserve even though final notification under Section 26-A of WLPA may not have been issued concerning protected areas like the sanctuary or national park. Thus, issuing final notification under Section 26-A of WLPA is not a sine qua non for declaring the protected area a tiger reserve.

105. Incidentally, the State Government's return clarifies that no final notification under Section 26-A of WLPA has been issued regarding Bhagwan Mahaveer WLS. But the final notification for an area of 44.27 sq. km from out of 208.48 sq. km is issued in respect of Mhadei WLS. Similarly, a final notification for an area of 56.23 sq. km out of the 211.05 sq. km area is issued in the case of Netravali WLS. A final notification under Section 26-A is already given regarding the entire area of 85.65 sq. km in the case of Cotigaon WLS. Apart from the fact that the issuance of the

final notification under Section 26-A of the WLPA is not sine qua non for declaring the protected area as a tiger reserve, even otherwise, non-settlement of rights and claims of forest dwellers in sanctuaries or protected areas cannot always be a valid ground to refuse or to delay the notification of a tiger reserve unreasonably.

106. Under Section 25-A of the WLPA, the Collector shall, as far as possible, complete the proceedings under Sections 19 to 25 (both inclusive) within two years from the date of notification of the declaration of sanctuary under Section 18. Section 19 requires the Collector to inquire into and determine the existence, nature, and extent of the rights of any person in or over the land within the sanctuary's limits. Section 21 requires the Collector to issue a proclamation specifying, as nearly as possible, the sanctuary's situation and limits. It requires any person claiming any right mentioned in Section 19 to prefer a written claim in the prescribed form before the Collector, specifying the nature and extent of such right with necessary details and the amount and particulars of compensation, if any, claimed in respect thereof. Section 22 provides for inquiry by the Collector. Section 23 deals with the powers of the Collector during such inquiry. Section 24 deals with the acquisition of rights and Section 25 deals with acquisition proceedings.

107. Section 26-A declaration referred to by the learned AG is made when a notification is issued under Section 18 and the period for preferring claims has elapsed, and all claims, if any, made in relation to any land in an area intended to be declared as a sanctuary have been disposed of by the State Government; or any area comprised within any reserve forest or any part of the territorial waters, which the State Government considers to be of adequate ecological faunal, floral, geomorphological, natural or zoological significance to protect, propagate or to develop wildlife or its environment, is to be included in a sanctuary.

108. Thus, the statutorily prescribed timeline for the settlement of rights and claims of forest dwellers is typically two years from the Section 18 notification date. Section 18(1) notification for Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary was issued in 1967; for Mhadei and Netravali Wild Life Sanctuary in 1999. However, to date, i.e. for 56 and 24 years, respectively, the State Government has not bothered to settle the rights and claims of forest dwellers. The Hon'ble Supreme Court, in its order dated 22.08.1997 in Writ Petition No.337 of 1995 in *Centre for Environment Law, WWF-India Vs Union of India & others (supra),* took cognisance of the failure of several State Governments in settling rights and claims of forest dwellers within the statutorily prescribed period of two years. The Hon'ble Supreme Court directed the State Government to complete this process within one year, i.e. by

21.08.1998. Despite the expiry of almost 25 years since this direction was issued, the State of Goa has not bothered to complete the process of determining and settling the rights of the various dwellers. And now, this abject failure, if not open disobedience, is cited as an excuse to avoid notifying the tiger reserve.

109. Therefore, when it comes to determining and settling the rights and claims of the various dwellers, the State of Goa has defaulted in compliance with the time schedule prescribed under the WLPA. Further, the State of Goa, in defiance of directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court dated 22.08.1997, has failed to determine and settle the rights of forest dwellers. As if this was insufficient, the State of Goa now puts forth its own lapses as an excuse for not notifying this area as a tiger reserve.

110. Thus, the State of Goa wishes to take undue advantage of its wrongful acts of defying the statutory timelines and the express direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on this subject. Such an excuse can hardly be countenanced. Based upon such reason and by trying to take undue advantage of its lapse, the State is not justified in not notifying the said area as a tiger reserve or contending that it would notify the said area as a tiger reserve only after rights and claims of the forest dwellers in the area are

settled and final notification is issued under Section 26A of the WLPA.

111. The NTCA has issued directions under Section 38-O (2) of WLPA vide Circular dated 19.02.2006 that in the areas of Wildlife Sanctuary & National park included in a tiger reserve and where the process of final declaration under Section 26A is yet to be completed (due to non-settlement of rights of forest dwellers), the same must be completed under Chapter IV read with Chapter IV-B of the WLPA. From this, it is pretty clear that there is no bar to notifying an area as a tiger reserve even before final notification under Section 26-A of WLPA is issued or even before the determination of rights and settlement of claims of forest dwellers may not be completed for all the above reasons. Instead, the process must be completed under the new provisions more beneficial to the dwellers.

112. For all the above reasons, we hold that issuing final notification under Section 26-A of WLPA is not a sine qua non for notifying protected areas as a tiger reserve. Even otherwise, the non-settlement of rights and claims of forest dwellers in the sanctuary and protected areas of Goa cannot, in the facts and circumstances discussed above, constitute a valid ground for the State Government to refuse or unreasonably delay in notifying Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve.

113. The fourth point for determination is whether there are any statutory procedural fetters for notifying a tiger reserve?

114. The learned AG first contended that there were no resolutions to back what he termed "suggestions or advise" of the NTCA; therefore, the NTCA's communications had no legal sanction. Secondly, he contended that the NTCA procedure contemplated invitation of the proposal from the State to notify to constitute tiger reserve, grant of "in principle" approval by the NTCA to such proposals, and the final approval after the tiger reserve States submit the tiger conservation plan under Section 38-V (3) of the WLPA. The learned AG submitted that unless there is strict compliance with this procedure, there was no question of the Petitioner or the NTCA insisting that the State notifies Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve.

115. On the aspect of the resolutions, no such defence is even remotely raised in the return filed on behalf of the State Government. The learned AG merely handed in some minutes of the NTCA proceedings and, based upon the same, contended that no resolution backed the NTCA's communications. Without the State Government's reply laying any foundation for such an argument, such an argument cannot be accepted.

116. Besides, the minutes produced by the learned AG do not show some consistent practice or procedure. There are instances where the tiger reserves were finally approved without this aspect being reflected, at least in the minutes produced by the learned AG. There are cases of tiger reserves being notified without calling for any proposal from the State Government. Mr Chodankar, learned counsel for Central Government and NTCA, based on instructions clearly stated that the NTCA has issued not only the recommendation contemplated by Section 38-V (1) but also directions under Section 38-O (2) of the WLPA to the State Government to notify the tiger reserve. Therefore, the State Government cannot avoid notifying Mhadei WLS and the other areas as a tiger reserve based upon a vague plea based upon some ambiguous practice or procedure.

117. The procedure referred to by the learned AG finds no reference in the WLPA. However, Section 38-P (3) does provide that the NTCA shall have the power to regulate its own procedure. Section 38-P (4) of WLPA provides that all orders and decisions of the NTCA shall be authenticated by the Member Secretary or any other officer of the NTCA duly authorised by the Member Secretary in this behalf. The Member Secretary has duly authenticated the communications on which the Petitioner rely. Mr Chodankar, learned counsel for the NTCA, asserts that these are the NTCA's recommendations.

118. Therefore, it is difficult to read or construe some procedural fetters as suggested by the learned AG. The State Government cannot avoid notifying Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve based upon such alleged and vague procedural fetters. Though the NTCA can formulate its procedure, it cannot impose any impediments when the Parliamentary Statute that constitutes it has chosen not to do so. So also, the states cannot place such fetters on the NTCA based on some vague practices or undefined procedures.

119. The NTCA (normative Standards for tourism activities and project tiger) Guidelines, 2012, were referred to by the learned AG and Ms Alvares. Recitals to these guidelines referred to clause (c) of sub-section (1) of Section 38-O of the WLPA, which empowers the NTCA to lay down normative standards for tourism activities and guidelines for project tiger from time to time for tiger conservation in the buffer and core areas of tiger reserves to ensure their due compliance. The NTCA has made these 2012 guidelines.

120. Clause 3 of the Guidelines refers to "background". This clause lists various tiger reserves and the area over which they are spread. This clause also refers to final approval being accorded to Kudremukh (Karnataka) for declaring it a tiger reserve. Finally, this clause also refers to the concerned State

Governments having been advised to send proposals for declaring the specified areas as tiger reserves. In clause (v), there is a reference to "Mhadei Sanctuary (Goa)".

121. Based on Clause 3 of the Guidelines, the learned AG argued that the NTCA communications constituted only some advice to send a proposal to the NTCA. He argued that advice did not amount to a recommendation. He further argued that the NTCA procedure required the proposal to be approved in principle. Only "in-principle approval" could be taken as NTCA's recommendation, based upon which the State Government would have a discretion whether or not to notify the area in question as a tiger reserve.

122. As discussed earlier, the minutes handed in by the learned AG do not show any consistent practice or procedure adopted by the NTCA. Besides, we found no significant difference between advice, suggestion or recommendation. Therefore, even in clause (3) of the guidelines, the NTCA recommended that the State Government notify a tiger reserve. The provisions of Chapter IV-B of WLPA do not expressly contemplate the invitation of the proposal from the State before any recommendation can be made or directions issued to notify a tiger reserve. The vague practice or undefined procedure referred to by the learned AG would have to yield to the provisions in Chapter IV-B of WLPA. Therefore, even

assuming that there is any procedure or practice, the same cannot indeed operate as a fetter to the NTCA recommending the State Government to notify a tiger reserve.

123. For all the above reasons, we find no statutory fetters disabling the NTCA to make a recommendation and the State of Goa to notify a tiger reserve based upon such a recommendation.

124. Fifthly, the State contends that equal protection is due to all wild animals, not just tigers. While the State's claim to steer clear of the Orwellian manner of treating some animals more equal than the others is appreciable, this should not be achieved by collectively reducing the level of protection for all wild animals, as the record unfortunately shows. Dr Johnsingh Report and the NCTA expert Committee Report speak of how the Mhadei WLS is still without a proper management plan. The reports talk about poaching pressure and unscientific data collection techniques.

125. Besides, the argument forgets that the entire ecosystem, including other animals, is protected by protecting the tiger. As discussed earlier, the tiger is a unique animal which plays a pivotal role in the health and diversity of an ecosystem. It is a top predator at the apex of the food chain. Therefore, the presence of tigers in the forest is an indicator of the well-being of the ecosystem. Protection of tigers in forests protects the habitats of

several other species. Indirect benefits of preserving a tiger include several ecosystem services like protection of rivers and other water sources, prevention of soil erosion and improvement of ecological services like pollination, water table retention etc. Conversely, the absence of this top predator indicates that its ecosystem is not sufficiently protected. Based on such considerations, not only was the *Project Tiger* formulated by the Central Government but the Parliament deemed it appropriate to arm this project with a statutory status by amending the WLPA and constituting the NTCA to give special protection to tigers and tiger habitats.

126. Finally, we refer to some Constitutional provisions, the scheme of WLPA, and precedents supporting the notification of a tiger reserve, given the repeated recommendations of NTCA and other factual and scientific material on record.

127. Article 48-A of the Constitution exhorts that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and safeguard the country's forests and wildlife. Article 48-A is a directive principle of State policy. Article 37 provides that directive principles shall not be enforceable by any Court. Still, the principles laid down therein are fundamental in the country's governance, and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making the laws. Similarly, Article 51-A(g) provides that every citizen of India shall be responsible for protecting and

improving the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and having compassion for living creatures.

128. Given these Constitutional provisions, the least expected of the State was not to oppose or unreasonably delay the proposal for notifying an area as a tiger reserve when a high-powered, expert, central body, i.e. the NTCA, recommends its notification. Even the material on record in the form of Forest Department officials' documentation & detailed studies, expert studies, etc., cries out for such notification if further damage is to be halted. The learned AG was at pains to point out that the State was not opposed to notifying the area as a tiger reserve but only felt that such notification could be issued once the rights and claims of all forest dwellers in the protected areas are determined and settled. Such an argument found no support in the legal regime of WLPA or even otherwise, as discussed above.

129. The WLPA was enacted to protect wildlife animals, birds and plants and to ensure the country's ecological and environmental security. The Statement of Objects and Reasons (SOR) records that the rapid decline of India's wild animals and birds, one of the richest and most varied in the world, has been a cause of grave concern. Some wild animals and birds have already become extinct in this country, and others are in danger of being so. Areas once teeming with wildlife have become devoid of it,

and even in Sanctuaries and National Parks, the protection afforded to wildlife needs to be improved.

130. The S.O.R. records that the Wild Birds and Animals Protection Act 1912 has become entirely outmoded. The existing State laws are outdated and provide punishments that are not commensurate with the offence and the financial benefits of poaching and trade in wildlife produce. Further, such laws mainly relate to the control of hunting and do not emphasise the other factors which are also prime reasons for the decline of India's wildlife, namely, taxidermy and trade in wildlife and products derived from there.

131. The S.O.R. records that having considered the relevant local provisions in the States; the Government concluded that these are neither adequate nor satisfactory. Therefore, there was a need for comprehensive legislation that would protect wild animals and birds and for all matters connected therewith or ancillary and incidental to it. Accordingly, the WLPA was enacted to (a) constitute a Wild Life Advisory Board for each State; (b) regulate the hunting of wild animals and birds; (c) lay down the procedure for declaring areas as Sanctuaries, National Parks, etc.; (d) regulate possession, acquisition or transfer of, or trade-in wild animals, animal articles and trophies and taxidermy thereof; and, (e) provide penalties for contravention of the Act.

132. Project Tiger was launched in the country on 1st April 1973 to conserve the endangered tiger. Initially, nine Tiger Reserves were covered under the project, which, when the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 was introduced, had increased to twenty-eight Tiger Reserves, falling in seventeen States. The SOR to the 2006 Amendment records this fact and refers to the Central Government funding support to the States under the "*Project Tiger*". It records that the implementation of the project over the years highlighted the need for a statutory Authority, having legal backing with well-defined functions, for the conservation of tigers in the country. Despite the project being ongoing for more than three decades, the status of tigers in the country remains critical, necessitating the need to address the issue right from planning to administration and making provisions for dealing with cases of violation.

133. The Task Force appointed for this purpose recommended strengthening Project Tiger by giving it statutory and administrative powers. The 2006 amendments note the concerns and needs of the local people. The amendments aimed to put in place a mechanism which would balance and manage the livelihood needs of the local people with the imperatives of tiger conservation. One of the significant objectives of the 2006 Amendment was to provide for the constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) and define its powers and

functions. Accordingly, amongst other amendments, Chapter IV-B, entitled "NATIONAL TIGER CONSERVATION AUTHORITY", in WLPA comprising Sections 38-K to 38-XA, was introduced in WLPA.

134. Section 38-K contains definitions. Section 38-L requires the Central Government to constitute the NTCA to exercise the power conferred on and to perform the functions assigned to it under the WLPA.

135. Section 38-O is concerned with the powers and functions of the NTCA, and the same reads as follows:-

> ***38-O. Powers and functions of Tiger Conservation Authority —(1)*** *The Tiger Conservation Authority shall have the following powers and perform the following functions, namely:-*
>
> *(a) to approve the Tiger Conservation Plan prepared by the State Government under sub-section (3) of section 38-V of this Act;*
>
> *(b) evaluate and assess various aspects of sustainable ecology and disallow any ecologically unsustainable land use such as, mining, industry and other projects within the tiger reserves;*
>
> *(c) lay down normative standards for tourism activities and guidelines for Project Tiger from time to time for*

tiger conservation in the buffer and core area of tiger reserves and ensure their due compliance;

(d) provide for management focus and measures for addressing conflicts of men and wild animals and to emphasise on co-existence in forest areas outside the National Parks, sanctuaries or tiger reserve, in the working plan code;

(e) provide information on protection measures including future conservation plan, estimation of population of tiger and its natural prey species, status of habitats, disease surveillance, mortality survey, patrolling, reports on untoward happenings and such other management aspects as it may deem fit including future plan conservation;

(f) approve, co-ordinate research and monitoring on tiger, co. predators, prey, habitat, related ecological and socio-economic parameters and their evaluation;

(g) ensure that the tiger reserves and areas linking one protected area or tiger reserve with another protected area or tiger reserve are not diverted for ecologically unsustainable uses, except in public interest and with the approval of the National Board for Wild Life and on the advice of the Tiger Conservation Authority;

(h) facilitate and support the tiger reserve management in the State for biodiversity conservation initiatives through eco-development and people's participation as per approved management plans and to support similar initiatives in adjoining areas consistent with the Central and State laws;

(i) ensure critical support including scientific, information technology and legal support for better implementation of the Tiger Conservation Plan;

(j) facilitate ongoing capacity building programme for skill development of officers and staff of tiger reserves; and

(k) perform such other functions as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act with regard to conservation of tigers and their habitat.

(2) The Tiger Conservation Authority may, in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under this Chapter, issue directions in writing to any person, officer or authority for the protection of tiger or tiger reserves and such person, officer or authority shall be bound to comply with the directions:

Provided that no such direction shall interfere with or affect the rights of local people particularly the Scheduled Tribes."

136. Section 38-P provides that the NTCA shall regulate its own procedure, and all orders and decisions of the NTCA shall be authenticated by the Member Secretary or any other officer of the said Authority duly authorised by the Member Secretary in this behalf.

137. Section 38-V is concerned with "*tiger conservation*", and the same, being most relevant for the issues raised in the present petition, is transcribed below for the convenience of reference:-

> *"**38-V. Tiger Conservation Plan.**—(1) The State Government shall, on the recommendation of the Tiger Conservation Authority, notify an area as a tiger reserve.*
>
> *(2) The provisions of sub-section (2) of section 18, sub-sections (2), (3) and (4) of section 27, sections 30, 32 and clauses (b) and (c) of section 33 of this Act shall, as far as may be, apply in relation to a tiger reserve as they apply in relation to a sanctuary.*
>
> *(3) The State Government shall prepare a Tiger Conservation Plan including staff development and deployment plan for the proper management of each area referred to in sub-section (1), so as to ensure -*
>
> *(a) protection of tiger reserve and providing site specific habitat inputs for a viable population of tigers, co-predators and prey animals without distorting the natural prey-predator ecological cycle in the habitat;*
>
> *(b) ecologically compatible land uses in the tiger reserves and areas linking one protected area or tiger reserve with another for addressing the livelihood concerns of local people, so as to provide dispersal habitats and corridor for spill over population of wild animals from the designated core areas of tiger reserves or from tiger breeding habitats within other protected areas;*

(c) the forestry operations of regular forest divisions and those adjoining tiger reserves are not incompatible with the needs of tiger conservation.

(4) Subject to the provisions contained in this Act, the State Government shall, while preparing a Tiger Conservation Plan, ensure the agricultural, livelihood, developmental and other interests of the people living in tiger bearing forests or a tiger reserve.

Explanation.— *For the purposes of this section, the expression "tiger reserve" includes*

(i) core or critical tiger habitat areas of National Parks and sanctuaries, where it has been established, on the basis of scientific and objective criteria, that such areas are required to be kept as inviolate for the purposes of tiger conservation, without affecting the rights of the Scheduled Tribes or such other forest dwellers, and notified as such by the State Government in consultation with an Expert Committee constituted for the purpose;

(ii) buffer or peripheral area consisting of the area peripheral to critical tiger habitat or core area, identified and established in accordance with the provisions contained in Explanation (i) above, where a lesser degree of habitat protection is required to ensure the integrity of the critical tiger habitat with adequate dispersal for tiger species, and which aim at promoting co-existence between wild life and human activity with due recognition of the livelihood, developmental, social and cultural rights of the local people, wherein the limits of such areas are determined on the basis of scientific and objective criteria in consultation with the concerned Gram Sabha and an Expert Committee constituted for the purpose.

(5) Save as for voluntary relocation on mutually agreed terms and conditions, provided that such terms and conditions satisfy the requirements laid down in this sub-section, no Scheduled Tribes or other forest dwellers shall be resettled or have their rights adversely affected for the purpose of creating inviolate areas for tiger conservation unless -

(i) the process of recognition and determination of rights and acquisition of land or forest rights of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwelling persons is complete;

(ii) the concerned agencies of the State Government, in exercise of their powers under this Act, establishes with the consent of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwellers in the area, and in consultation with an ecological and social scientist familiar with the area, that the activities of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers or the impact of their presence upon wild animals is sufficient to cause irreversible damage and shall threaten the existence of tigers and their habitat;

(iii) the State Government, after obtaining the consent of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers inhabiting the area, and in consultation with an independent ecological and social scientist familiar with the area, has come to a conclusion that other reasonable options of co-existence, are not available;

(iv) resettlement or alternative package has been prepared providing for livelihood for the affected individuals and communities and fulfils the requirements given in the National Relief and Rehabilitation Policy;

(v) the informed consent of the Gram Sabha concerned, and of the persons affected, to the resettlement programme has been obtained; and

(vi) the facilities and land allocation at the resettlement location are provided under the said programme, otherwise their existing rights shall not e interfered with."

138. Section 38-W bars the alteration in the boundaries of a tiger reserve except on a recommendation of the NTCA and approval of the National Board for Wild Life (NBWL). Further, this Section provides that no State Government shall de-notify a tiger reserve except in the public interest with the approval of the NTCA and NBWL. Section 38-X provides for the establishment of Tiger Conservation Fund by the respective State Governments for tiger reserves within the State.

139. The 2006 amendment provided for the constitution of NTCA, and the 2003 amendment introduced Section 5A for the constitution of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). Considering the powers and functions of the NBWL, the Hon'ble Supreme Court in ***Center for Environmental Law, World Wide Fund-India v/s. Union of India***[14] held that NBWL is the top most scientific body established to frame policies and advise the Central and State Governments on the ways and means of promoting wildlife conservation and to review the progress in the field of

14 *(2013) 8 SCC 234*

wildlife conservation in the country and suggesting measures for improving the same. The Court held that Central and the State Governments could not brush aside NBWL's opinion without any cogent or acceptable reasons having regard to the position, the constitution, powers and functions of the NBWL.

140. Despite providing for the constitution of NBWL by the 2003 amendment, Parliament deemed it appropriate to constitute the NTCA vide the 2006 amendment. Thus, yet another expert and high-powered body was constituted that focused on protecting the tiger and tiger habitat. Accordingly, the observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *Center for Environmental Law, World Wide Fund-India* (supra) would equally apply, and the State Government cannot be permitted to brush aside the NTCA's opinion without any cogent or acceptable reason. Delaying implementation of the NTCA's recommendations unreasonably and for reasons which are neither genuine nor germane amounts to brushing aside the NTCA's opinion without any cogent or acceptable reasons.

141. In *Center for Environmental Law, World Wide Fund-India* (supra), the Hon'ble Supreme Court observed that the rapid deterioration of the ecology due to human interference is aiding the rapid disappearance of several wild animal species. Poaching and the wildlife trade, habitat loss, human-animal conflict,

epidemics etc., are also some of the reasons which threaten and endanger some species. The Court recorded in para 42 that the fragmented nature of wildlife-rich areas, increased human pressure, habitat degradation, the proliferation of invasive species, human-animal conflicts, poaching, impacts of changing climate etc., are some challenges that must be addressed at a war footing. The necessity for ensuring better wildlife protection outside the protected areas and initiating recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats was also highlighted by the Court.

142. In *Center for Environmental Law, World Wide Fund-India* (supra), the controversy concerned the translocation of some of the Gir Asiatic Lions from the State of Gujarat to the State of Madhya Pradesh. The NBWL had opined that the Gir Asiatic Lions must have a second home in Kuno, Madhya Pradesh. The State of Gujarat and its Board for Wildlife argued that the Gir Asiatic Lions were well cared for in Gujarat. Further, such lions were like family members of all Gujarathis, and therefore, the same could not be parted with. The Court rejected the State of Gujarat's contention by styling the same as anthropocentric, not ecocentric. The Court held that the views of NBWL constituted by the Central Government must prevail over the opinions expressed by the State Government or the State Board for Wildlife.

143. In *Center for Environmental Law, World Wide Fund-India* (supra), the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that in such matters, our approach should be ecocentric and not anthropocentric. Anthropocentrism is always human interest focused, thinking that a non-human has only instrumental value to humans; in other words, humans take precedence and human responsibilities to non-human are based on human benefits. Eco-centrism is nature-centred, where humans are part of nature and non-humans have intrinsic value. In other words, human interest does not take automatic precedence, and humans have obligations to non-humans independently of human interest. Eco-centrism is life-centred and nature-centred, where nature includes both humans and non-humans. The Court also held that we must apply "*species best interest standard*" because such species have equal rights to exist on this earth. The Court held that Article 21 of the Constitution of India protects human rights and casts an obligation on human beings to protect and preserve a species becoming extinct. Conservation and protection of the environment is an inseparable part of the right to life.

144. In ***T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad v/s. Union of India***[15] ***(wild buffalo case)***, the Hon'ble Supreme Court issued sweeping directions for protecting wild buffaloes in the State of Chattisgarh. In the context of the schemes for protecting and

15 *(2012) 3 SCC 277*

conserving wild buffaloes, Asiatic lions, and other critically endangered species, the Court highlighted the necessity for a recovery programme to ensure long-term conservation schemes. The Court held that such schemes have statutory status and must be implemented in their letter and spirit.

145. In *T. N. Godavarman Thirumulpad (wild buffalo case)* (supra), the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that the human-wildlife conflict is fast becoming a critical threat to the survival of many endangered species like wild buffalo, elephants, tigers, lions, etc. Such conflicts affect its population and have broadened environmental impacts on ecosystem equilibrium and biodiversity conservation. *Laws are man-made, hence there is likelihood of anthropocentric bias towards man, and rights of wild animals often tend to be of secondary importance but in the universe man and animals are equally placed, but human rights approach to environmental protection in case of conflict, is often based on anthropocentricity. Man-animal conflict often results not because animals encroach human territories but vice versa. Often, man thinks otherwise, because man's thinking is rooted in anthropocentrism. The Court said that we must remember that we are talking about the conflict between man and endangered species, endangered not because of natural causes alone but because man failed to preserve and protect them; the attitude was destructive, for pleasure and gain.*

146. In the above case, the Court further emphasised that the State was duty-bound to preserve and protect wildlife and its corridors. The Court noted that *areas outside protected areas is reported to have the maximum number of man-animal conflict where the wild animals fall prey to poachers easily and often invite ire of the cultivators when they cause damage to their crops.* The Court held that these issues have to be scientifically managed to preserve and protect the endangered species, like wild buffalo and other species included in Schedule I, Part I of the WLPA, and other species that face extinction. The Court stressed that environmental justice could be achieved only if we drift away from the anthropocentric principle to ecocentric. The Court held that Ecocentrism is nature-centred, where humans are part of nature and non-humans have intrinsic value. In other words, human interest does not take automatic precedence, and humans have obligations to non-humans independently of human interest. Ecocentrism is life-centred and nature-centred, where nature includes both humans and non-humans.

147. In ***State of Bihar Vs Murad Ali Khan***[16]**,** the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that the policy and object of the wildlife laws have a long history and are the result of increasing awareness of the compelling need to restore the serious ecological imbalances introduced by the depredations inflicted on nature by man. The

16 *(1988) 4 SCC 655*

State to which the ecological imbalances and the consequent environmental damage have reached is so alarming that unless immediate, determined and effective steps are taken, the damage might become irreversible. The preservation of the fauna and flora, some species of which are getting extinct at an alarming rate, has been a great and urgent necessity for the survival of humanity and *these laws reflect a last-ditch battle for the restoration, in part at least, a grave situation emerging from a long history of callous insensitiveness to the enormity of the risks to mankind that go with the deterioration of environment.* The tragedy of the predicament of the civilised man is that "*Every source from which man has increased his power on earth has been used to diminish the prospects of his successors. All his progress is being made at the expense of damage to the environment which he cannot repair and cannot foresee*".

148. In the above case, the Court, after quoting King Asoka's decree for the preservation of wildlife and environment (Third Century B.C.), held that Environmentalists' conception of the ecological balance in nature is based on the fundamental concept that nature is "*a series of complex biotic communities of which a man is an inter-dependant part" and that it should not be given to a part to tresspass and diminish the whole. The largest single factor in the depletion of the wealth of animal life in nature has been the "civilized man" operating directly through excessive*

commercial hunting or, more disastrously, indirectly through invading or destroying natural habitats."

149. In ***World Wild Fund for Nature India v/s. Union of India & Ors.***[17], the Division Bench of Delhi High Court speaking through Dalveer Bhandari, J (as His Lordship then was) discusses in great detail the genesis of WLPA in a public interest litigation seeking directions to take all proper and necessary steps to protect wild animals including tigers in particular from being poached or illegally hunted. The Court referred to Articles 21 and 48-A of the Constitution and observed that the directive principle is neither "a mere rope of sand" nor "a mere pious wish." The Court held that both the fundamental rights and directive principles are supplementary and complementary to each other. The fundamental rights are a means to achieve the directive principles that constitute the aspirations whose fulfilment is regarded as essential to the kind of society our country should have.

150. The Division Bench of Delhi High Court refers to an article in "Time Magazine" (March 28, 1994) about how Asia's giant cats are a vanishing breed, disappearing faster than any other large mammal except for the rhinoceros. This article warns that unless something dramatic is done to reverse the trend, tigers will be seen only in captivity, prowling in zoos or performing in

17 *1994 SCC Online Del 233*

circuses. The wild tigers of old will be gone forever, their glory surviving merely in storybooks, on film and in dreams. The article also mentions, *"..... for all the tiger's power, it can be an easy animal to kill. Many cats in the Ranthambhore park have died from the poison that villagers sprinkled on animals that the tigers had killed and temporarily left on the ground.....".*

151. Therefore, based upon provisions of the Constitution of India and the WLPA, we cannot allow the tiger, which is a national animal, to fall into a death trap (to quote the exact words of the NTCA expert committee constituted to inquire into unfortunate death of tigress and three cubs in the Mhadei WLS in January 2020.) On the conspectus of material on record, the legal and constitutional scheme and repeated recommendations of the NTCA, a mandamus is liable to be issued to the State of Goa to notify the Mhadei WLS and other areas referred by the NTCA as a tiger reserve in compliance with the mandate of Section 38-V(1) of the WLPA. Further, the State Government must take emergent steps to prepare a tiger conservation plan and submit the same for approval to the NTCA as required by Section 38-V (3) of the WLPA.

152. There appears to be some misimpression that the moment the area is notified as a tiger reserve, there would be large-scale displacements of populations and the rights of the forest dwellers

would be drastically affected. This needs to be corrected. The material on record shows that the Goa Forest Department officials have already excluded the high-habitation areas from the proposed tiger reserve when preparing the plan. Besides, several provisions in WLPA and the NTCA Guidelines of 2012 stress the co-existence of humans with wildlife. Therefore, the Goa Forest Department officials must initiate a campaign to assure the scheduled tribes or other forest dwellers that their interests will not be adversely affected and their concerns will be suitably addressed.

153. The Forest Department of the State of Goa must make forest dwellers, including in particular the Scheduled Tribes, aware that every care would be taken to secure their rights instead of creating an impression that their rights would be adversely affected by notifying the Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve. Further, while preparing the tiger conservation plan, the State Government must address the local persons' livelihood concerns as required under Section 38-V (b) of the WLPA.

154. Regards the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers, the explanation to Section 38-(V) of the WLPA provides that the expression “tiger reserve” includes the critical tiger habitat areas of national parks and sanctuaries, where it has been established, based on scientific and objective criteria, that such

areas are required to be kept as inviolate for tiger conservation, "*without affecting the rights of the Scheduled Tribes or such other forest dwellers*" and notified as such by the State Government in consultation with an expert committee constituted for the purpose.

155. Similarly, a tiger reserve includes buffer or peripheral area consisting of the area peripheral to critical tiger habitat or core area, where a lesser degree of habitat protection is required to ensure the integrity of the critical tiger habitat with adequate dispersal for tiger species, and which aim at "*promoting co-existence between wildlife and human activity with due recognition of the livelihood, developmental, social and cultural rights of the local people'*, wherein the limits of such areas are determined based on scientific and objective criteria in consultation with the concerned Gram Sabha and an Expert Committee constituted for the purpose.

156. Section 38-V (5) provides that save as for voluntary relocation on mutually agreed terms and conditions, provided that such terms and conditions satisfy the requirements laid down in this sub-section, no Scheduled Tribes or other forest dwellers shall be resettled or have their rights adversely affected to create inviolate areas for tiger conservation unless:-

(i) the process of recognition and determination of rights and acquisition of land or forest rights of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwelling persons is complete;

(ii) the concerned agencies of the State Government, in exercise of their powers under this Act establishes with the consent of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwellers in the area, and in consultation with an ecological and social scientist familiar with the area, that the activities of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers or the impact of their presence upon wild animals is sufficient to cause irreversible damage and shall threaten the existence of tigers and their habitat;

(iii) the State Government, after obtaining the consent of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers inhabiting the area, and in consultation with an independent ecological and social scientist familiar with the area, has come to a conclusion that other reasonable options of co-existence, are not available;

(iv) resettlement or alternative package has been prepared providing for livelihood for the affected individuals and communities and fulfils the requirements given in the National Relief and Rehabilitation Policy;

(v) the informed consent of the Gram Sabha concerned, and of the persons affected, to the resettlement programme has been obtained; and

(vi) the facilities and land allocation at the resettlement location are provided under the said programme, otherwise their existing rights shall not be interfered with.

157. Therefore, it is not as if no sooner than a tiger reserve is notified, there would be some large-scale resettlement and relocation of Scheduled Tribes or other forest dwellers occupying some areas in the tiger reserve. Besides, from the material on record, the Goa Forest Department officials have ensured that most habitation areas are already excluded from the core area of the proposed tiger reserve.

158. The NTCA's Guidelines of 2012 also contain provisions for promoting coexistence between wildlife and human activity with due recognition of the local people's livelihood, developmental, social and cultural rights. We think that the Forest Department should disseminate the information about these guidelines and policy instead of encouraging the impression that the rights of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers would be adversely affected or that there would be some large-scale immediate displacement.

159. For all the above reasons, we dispose of this petition by making the following order:-

> (i) We direct the State Government to notify the Mhadei WLS and other areas referred to in NTCA's communications (and the plans prepared by the Goa Forest Department Officials) as a tiger reserve under

Section 38-V (1) of the WLPA within three months from today;

(ii) We direct the State Government to take all steps to prepare a tiger conservation plan as contemplated by Section 38-V (3) of the WLPA and to forward the same to the NTCA within three months from notifying the Mhadei WLS and other areas as a tiger reserve;

(iii) We direct the NTCA to render full assistance to the State Government for completing the above process and after that to expeditiously process the State Government's Tiger Conservation Plan and take a decision thereon within three months of receiving the tiger conservation plan from the State Government;

(iv) We direct the State Government to set up anti-poaching camps at strategic locations to be staffed by forest guards, watchers, etc., in the WLS and National Parks in the State of Goa. This exercise must be completed within six months;

(v) We direct the State Government and the Forest Department authorities to take emergent steps to ensure that there are no encroachments in the protected forest

areas like WLS and National Parks pending notification of the tiger reserve, and even after that;

(vi) We direct the State Government to determine and settle the rights and claims of the Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers following the law as expeditiously as possible and preferably within 12 months from today.

160. The rule is made absolute in the above terms without any cost order.

BHARAT P. DESHPANDE, J. **M. S. SONAK, J.**

SUCHITRA NANDAN SINGBAL

Rane says order 'dangerous', will get it vacated by SC 'at any cost'

TNN | Jul 25, 2023, 12.18 PM IST

PANAJI: After the high court of Bombay at Goa on Monday directed the Goa government to notify a tiger reserve, forest minister Vishwajit Rane said that the government would immediately approach the Supreme Court to have the HC order vacated, reports Gauree Malkarnekar. He said the high court order can have "dangerous repercussions" if implemented.
Rane also said that the people of Sattari need not be unsettled by the judgement. "We have to get this judgement vacated at any cost," he said.

"I had a detailed discussion with chief minister Pramod Sawant and AG Devidas Pangam on the implications of the high court decision giving directions to the state government to notify the Mhadei wildlife sanctuary and peripheral areas as a tiger reserve. After examining the order, we shall explore all options before approaching the Supreme Court to have this order vacated," said Rane.Where will we rehabilitate people if entire village is notified: Rane

We respect the decision taken by the high court, but as a state government, we will stand by the decision taken by the state wildlife board," he said, referring to the recent meeting of the board where it said the tiger reserve proposal is not suited for Goa.
Rane said sufficient measures are already in place to protect Goa's sanctuary areas.
"We have taken a lot of measures for the protection of sanctuary areas in Goa. Going beyond this can prove problematic for the people residing in the forest areas. And we cannot see this and keep quiet as the government and as elected representatives. This is a serious issue. It will have dangerous repercussions. Asthe state government, it is our right to explore our options," said Rane.
The minister said the state is already finding it difficult to rehabilitate those residing in habitations inside the wildlife sanctuaries of Goa.

"Where will we rehabilitate them when the entire village is notified? Development will have to then stop. The decision taken by the high court is good, but we have to think about what is best for the state. We have been elected by the people. We also feel that somewhere, we need to protect the interest of our people," said Rane.

He said that not only will people from his and his wife's constituencies in Sattari taluka be affected by the high court judgment, but it will have larger implications.

"It is not only a question of the people of Sattari, the high court judgment has asked peripheral areas also to be notified. The people of Sattari need not get unsettled by this. This government will stand by the interests of the people, and there is no question of letting the people down. We feel the decision we had taken in the wildlife board is proper and we have to defend this now in the Supreme Court," said Rane.

He said the government's stand has been consistent on the tiger reserve issue right from the start.

"Discussions are also on with officials of the Union environment ministry. We will represent before the Supreme Court what we feel is in the interest of the state. I have sat over the last two hours reading the entire judgment. Our lawyers will keep the state's say before the Supreme Court and get justice for the state," he said.

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Goa engages Rohatgi to fight tiger reserve order

TNN | Aug 22, 2023, 12.10 AM IST

Panaji: Weeks after the high court of Bombay at Goa ordered the state to declare the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS) and its surrounding areas as a tiger reserve within three months, the state appointed senior counsel Mukul Rohatgi to challenge the order in the Supreme Court.
An order issued by the law department said that Rohatgi, a former attorney general for India, will represent the state "to challenge the judgment..." and "to defend the interest of the state of Goa".

The order also said that Rohatgi's office may get in touch with the state forest department, Altinho, to get the details of the case.
The July 24 order by the high court gave the state three months to declare the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary and its surrounding areas as a tiger reserve.

The court also directed the government to take all steps to prepare a tiger conservation plan within the same time period.
"This court cannot blink at the reality that often at the state level, regional, parochial, anthropomorphic, and times, even narrow political considerations would prevail over the more significant national interests involved in conserving and protecting the tiger and the tiger habitat," stated the judgment by justices Mahesh Sonak and Bharat Deshpande.

The judgment came days after the state government turned down a proposal to declare a tiger reserve.

"While the state's claim to steer clear of the Orwellian manner of treating some animals more equal than the others is appreciable, this should not be achieved by collectively reducing the level of protection for all wild animals, as the record unfortunately shows," the court had observed.

The high court directed the state to determine and settle the rights and claims of Scheduled Tribes and other forest dwellers following the law as expeditiously as possible, and preferably within 12 months of the judgment.

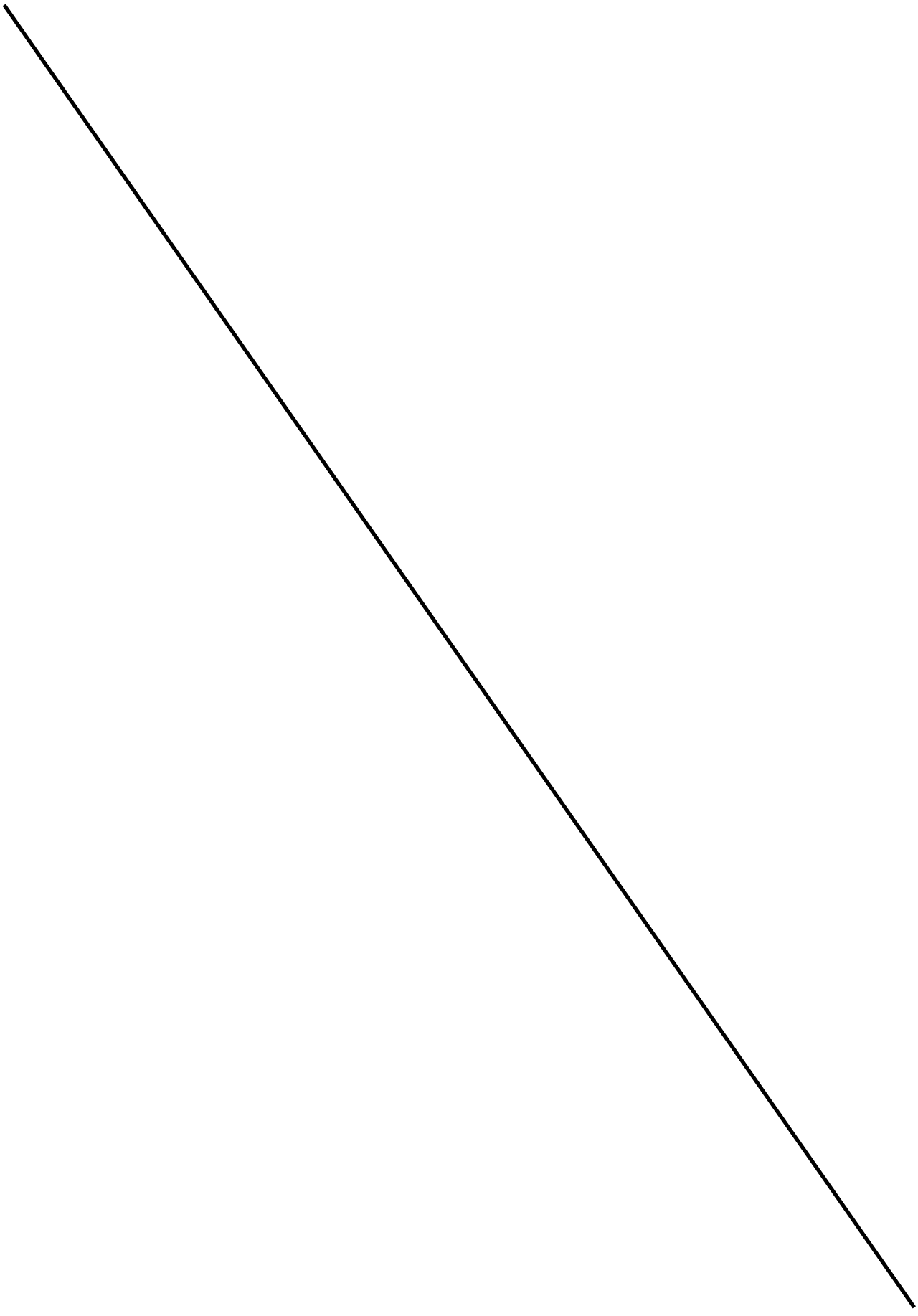
Reacting to the high court order, forest minister Vishwajit Rane had said that the government would immediately approach the Supreme Court to have the HC order vacated.

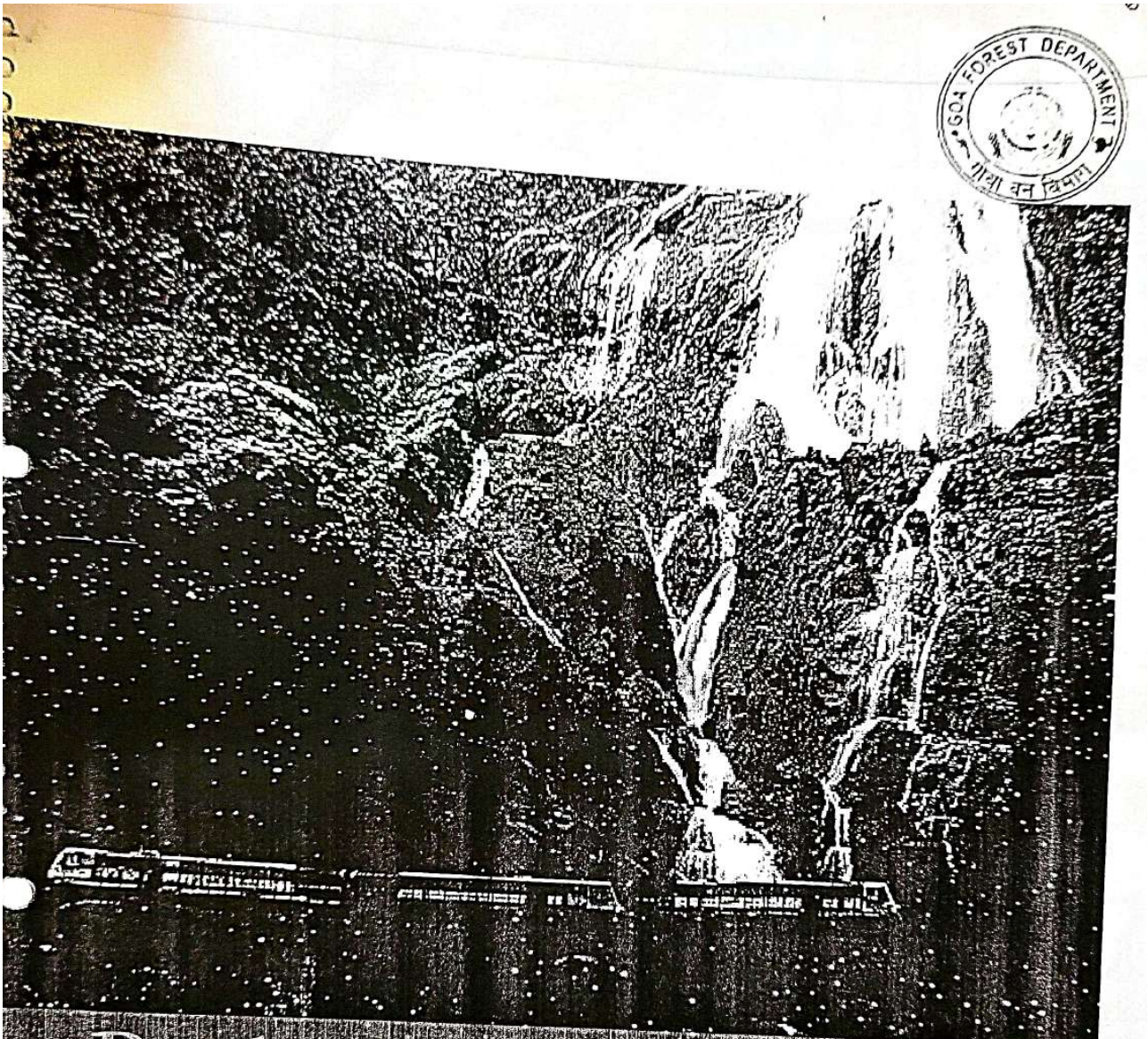
Rane had said the high court order can have "dangerous repercussions" if implemented. Rane also said that the people of Sattari need not be unsettled by the judgement. "We have to get this judgement vacated at any cost," he said.

Deviya Rane raises question over number of tigers in Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary

By
Digital Goa
-
July 28, 2023

Digital Goa, July 27 – Raising question about the presence of tigers in the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, BJP's Poriem MLA Deviya Rane asserted on the floor of the house today that she was totally against declaring the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary and peripheral areas as Tiger Reserve. Claiming that thousands of people will be affected if this was done, she questioned, "Is there any survey done on how many tigers come there?" she questioned. "We have to rethink of the (High Court) order," she added. Forest Minsiter Vishwajeet Rane on his part asserted that people's interest has to be protected. "It is easy for some NGOs to go to court. This NGO has a habit of going to court," he said.





Development of Eco-Camps at Collem, South Goa

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Detailed Project Report

28 June 2023

DARASHAW

Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Overview

Goa Forest Development Corporation ("GFDC" – herein after referred to as the "Authority") established under the Companies Act, 1956 in the year 1997. The main objective of the corporation is scientific management of cashew and rubber plantation, processing and marketing of produces and to promote eco-development and eco-tourism. In lieu of the above GDFC intends to develop additional Eco-camp Aranyak Camp Site at Collem, Dharbandora Taluka, South Goa.

Forests of Goa form the part of Western Ghats, the region which have been internationally recognized as Biodiversity Hotspot of the world owing to its rich flora and fauna. Most of the Goan forests are located in the eastern region of the state. The forests of Goa are known for their grandeur and majesty. They are like a green pearl of the tourist paradise state. From Moist Mixed Deciduous Forests to Sub-Tropical Hill Forests, from Semi-Evergreen Forests to Evergreen Forests-the forests are the life supporting systems of the state as they are the store house of precious rivers & other natural resources.

Considering the tourism potential of the state, the Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC), Government of Goa has envisaged further developing Aranyak Camp Site at Collem Village located in the interiors of Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park, Goa as an Eco- hinterland tourism destination, under the State government funding.

The overarching objective of the GFDC is to promote and implement holistic development, advertising and promotion of the selected site based on the convergence of various efforts in line with the forest department and other departments & agencies of the state.

Further, the aim of the GFDC is to establish Bhagwan Mahaveer WLS & NP , Mollem into a world-class destination by holistically bringing the possible gaps in terms of:

- Connectivity
- Better facilities for better experience to the Nature Enthusiast
- Encouraging eco-friendly materials and construction
- Providing employment opportunities for local population
- Local community involvement for inclusiveness
- Promotion and advertisement
- Bringing in private investment and expertise
- Youth and women empowerment

In pursuance of the above, the GFDC has decided to engage a consultant of national repute with knowledge of local conditions for preparation of a Development Plan for the development of additional Eco-huts at Aranyak Camp Site at Collem.

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The selected Consultant is envisaged to carry out a study to assess existing scenario, conduct gap analysis of the destination, formulate a detailed project report and suggest project budget for development of the selected site.

Darashaw & Co. Pvt. Ltd. has been appointed as Consultant for Development of Eco- hinterland tourism at Collem, South Goa.

1.2 Assignment Objectives

- Formulate vision for integrated development of Aranyak Camp Site at Collem
- Design a framework for the development of eco-camps to global standards
- Facilitate long term growth and development of hinterland tourism industry in a sustainable manner and create a vehicle to ensure robust operation and maintenance with effective publicity and promotional activities
- Develop the project looking at the areas for potential development, which contribute to employment generation for local population
- To create Nature Enthusiast link adventure activities along with corporate activities
- To educate and develop awareness for conservation of forest among Nature Enthusiasts visiting the site
- To create employment opportunities for local population
- To adhere to Sustainable practices such as zero waste management, Water recharge pits

1.3 Understanding the project

A prominent Nature Enthusiast attraction is defined as Eco-hinterland tourism when its appeal is attributed to distinct qualities including uniqueness, location, reputation and media attention and elite and excellent Nature Enthusiast thus making it a must see attraction and has a relatively large socio- economic influence in the region.

The desirable list of proposed attractions are:

- World class experience
- Providing clean, safe and secure environment
- Providing ample Nature Enthusiast activities
- Catering to various Nature Enthusiast requirements in terms of affordability, multi-lingual guides, signages, parking, attraction development, accomodation and hospitality with meeting facility
- Application of best sustainable practices to minimize the dependancy on external sources

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1.4 Project approach

The methodology is undertaken into several stages as detailed out below:

1. Understanding of the scope of work – This involves site visits and understanding the local conditions and reviewing the gap assessement
2. Data collection – Prepare studies on development of site in a best possible way which can ultimately serve the purpose of attracting Nature Enthusiasts. This stage also involves creating inventory of resources and potential developments
3. Understanding of local conditons and hinterland tourism – This stage includes developing the proposal after studying the local conditions and requirement of the hour which could increase the overall hinterland tourism of the region
4. Concept development and innovative suggestions – The concept to be developed is after understanding the above stages and innovative suggestions to be added in the conceptual drawings
5. Proposed site development plans – Broad project conceptualization plans of the proposed development which could cater all age and type of Nature Enthusiasts.
6. Use of materials – The specifications to develop for best use of materials that could suit the local conditons and also adhering to forest norms
7. Sustainable practices – Adhering to the best practices for creating sustainable resources to address power, water and waste issues.
8. Detailed cost – Provide indicative cost for project components under proposed heads through a phased plan.
9. Marketing and publicity – The marketing and publicity measures to be studied for promotion of the said proposal

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2. LOCATION AND ANALYSIS

2.1 Geographic location

Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park is a 240 square kilometres (93 sq mi) protected area located in the Western Ghats of West India, in Dharbandora Taluka, Goa State, along the eastern border with Karnataka. The area is situated near the town of Mollem, 57 kilometres (35 mi) east of Panaji, the state capital of Goa. National Highway 748 divides it into two parts and the Mormugao - Londa railway line passes through the area. It is located between 15°15"30' to 15°29"30' N and 74°10"15' to 74°20"15' E. It contains several important temples dating to the Kadambas of Goa, and home to waterfalls, such as Dudhsagar Falls and Tambdi Falls. The parkland is also home to a community of nomadic buffalo herders known as the Dhangars.

Proposed site is about 1.2 kms from the nearest railway station i.e. Kulem (Collem)

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Figure 1 Map showing the site location in Dharbandora Taluka

Site Area: 20960 sq.m.

Ownership: Forest Department, Government of Goa

Location : Collem village, Dharbandora Taluka, South Goa

Geographical points – 15°20'45.7"N, 74°15'10.0"E

Land use: - Protected Forest .

2.2 Significance of Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park

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This area was first known as Mollem Game Sanctuary. It was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1969 and renamed as Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary. The core area of the sanctuary covering 107 square kilometres (41 sq mi) was notified as Mollem National Park in 1978. The Western Ghats are home to an abundance of wildlife and this sanctuary was established to preserve it.

2.3 Connectivity

Goa houses a wide range of beaches, heritage monuments, leisure and adventure activities. It is a well-established Nature Enthusiast destination on a global platform. The State is well connected by air, rail network, port and roads with all the major cities in India. The State has an International airport and majority of the Nature Enthusiast inflows has been through air travel. Of late, the state has witnessed Nature Enthusiast inflow by Cruise ships as well.

Road Connectivity:

The State has excellent road network in place and is well connected with important urban centers like Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Belgaum, Mangalore, Kolhapur etc. NH-66 and NH-748 passes through the state which is approximately 50 Km from the proposed site. The site can be directly approached from SH-4. State has daily bus services from all the major urban centres like Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore etc. The nearest bus stand from the proposed site is Ponda bus stand which is approx. 30 Kms.

Rail Connectivity:

The nearest railway station to the proposed site is Kulem (Collem) Railway Station, which is located at a distance of 1.2 Kms

Air Connectivity:

The existing airport Goa International Airport (Dabolim airport) which is located at a distance of 54 Kms from the proposed site has direct as well as connecting flights to Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Bangalore, Chennai on a daily basis and the frequency of the services is very good.

The new Manohar Internationnal Airport at Goa, which is located at Mopa in South Goa is at a distance of around 78 Kms from Mollem Village.

2.4 Physiography & Climate

The Physiography of the site is on fairly flat terrain with lateritic soil and interspersed with soil patches. The climate is classified as tropical. It receives heavy rainfall in the monsoon. The average temperature is approximately 25 degrees Celsius.

2.5 Flora & Fauna

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This Wildlife sanctuary contains pristine vegetation classified as West Coast tropical evergreen forests, West Coast semi-evergreen forests and moist deciduous forests. The evergreen forests are mainly seen at higher altitudes and along the river banks. The predominant species are *Terminalia*, *Lagerstroemia*, *Xylia* and *Dalbergia*. The forest canopy is almost closed and the availability of grass is very limited. There are several perennial water sources in the sanctuary and the availability of water is not a limiting factor for wildlife.

The National park's flora consists of evergreen forests, tropical evergreen forests, and moist deciduous woods. Wildlife in and around the park includes the leopard, leopard cat, jungle cat, wild dogs, Sloth bear, Sambar deer, Spotted deer, Chowsingha, Barking deer , wild pig and Gaur also known as the Indian Bison. Phenomenal snake species include king cobras, krails, vipers, and pythons. But there are many more species of birds that may be seen in this area, including the Paradise flycatcher and Indian Great Black Woodpecker. One should not miss the visit to the Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park for the jungle Safari.

2.6 Site Analysis

Mollem is becoming a popular hinterland destination on Goa. Due to its geographic location it has good influx of Nature Enthusiast visiting both from Goa and Karnataka. Majority of Nature Enthusiasts visiting the location are presently domestic Nature Enthusiasts.

This sanctuary and national park contain several geological, cultural and visitor service attractions that make this largest protected area in Goa a popular visitor destination. The site is located inside the Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park. One can only enter through the forest check post which is nearby the proposed site. The site at present has 4 Swiss tents, 4 open huts, 1 dining area, 1 kitchen, 1 protection office, 1 amphitheatre, 1 elevated sitting gallery, 1 overhead tank, 1 well and a pump house inter-connected with pathways. The existing pathway lighting needs improvement. Also area for parking and other basic amenities need improvements. One of the advantages of this site is its proximity to the famous Dudhsagar Waterfalls which has a very large footfall during the season. With many other attractions nearby the area could be further utilized for the benefit of proposed development.

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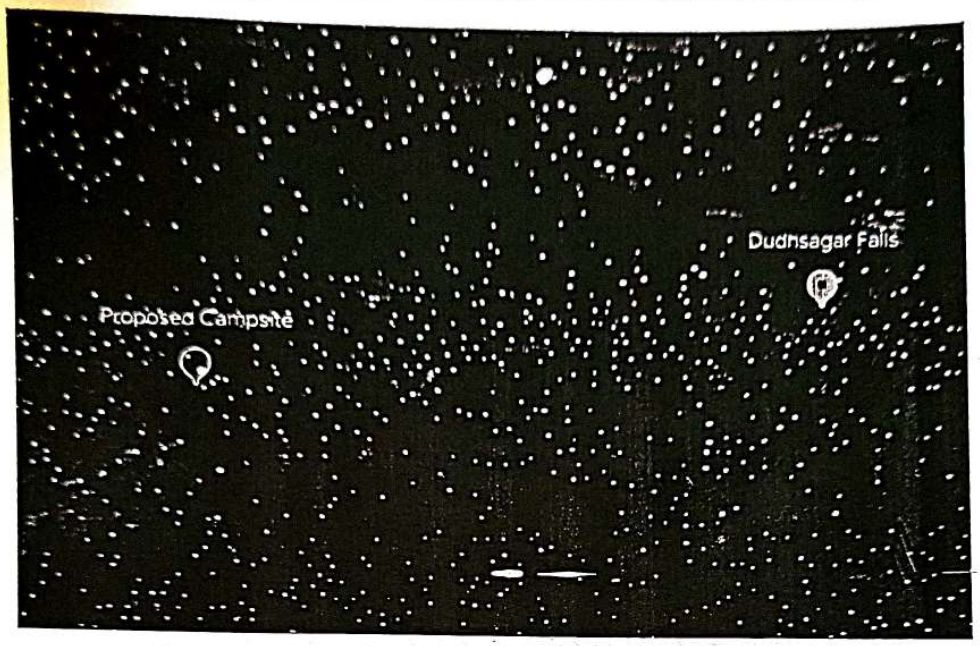

Figure 2 Proposed site for development of Eco-Camps at Aranyak Camp

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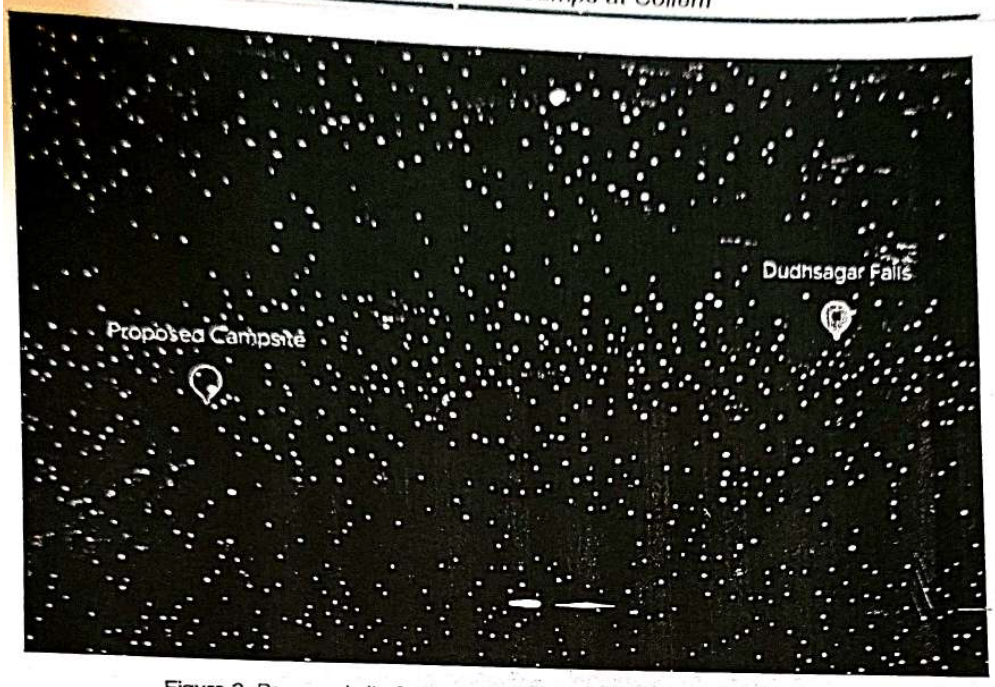

Figure 2 Proposed site for development of Eco-Camps at Aranyak Camp

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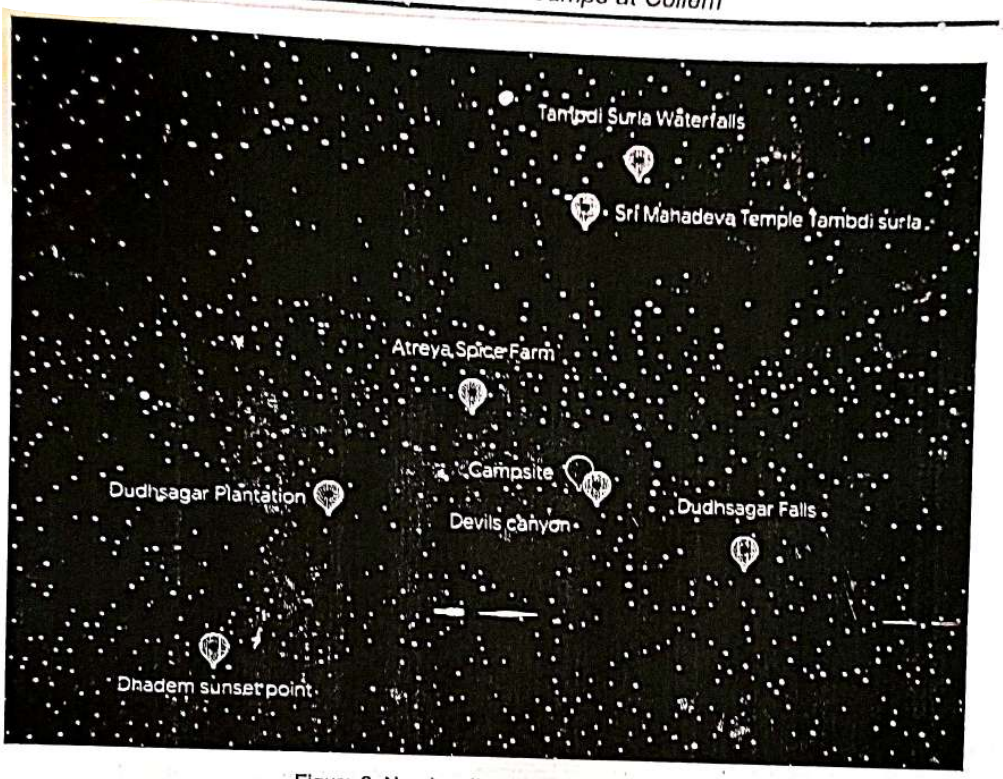

Figure 3 Nearby attractions to Camp site

3. HINTERLAND TOURISM SUPPLY AND DEMAND

3.1 Global tourism scenario

The tourism and travel industry is one of the world's largest economic sectors creating both direct and indirect jobs, aiding in generating prosperity across the globe and plays a big part in driving exports of a country. The year 2017 was celebrated as International year for Sustainable Tourism Development with focus on:

- Sustainable economic growth
- Employment, social inclusion and poverty reduction
- Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change
- Cultural values, diversity and heritage
- Mutual understanding, peace and security

The year 2017 was a record year for International tourism. International tourist arrivals grew for the eight consecutive years, a sequence of uninterrupted growth.

Tourism continues to be one of the best positioned economic sectors to drive inclusive socio-economic growth, provide sustainable livelihoods, foster peace and

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understanding and help to protect our environment. However, the overall sector is facing major challenges:

- Safety and security concerns and the temptation to build new barriers to travel
- The technological revolution and
- Charting a course towards sustainable development

3.2 National tourism scenario

The travel and tourism sector helps strategic importance in the Indian economy providing several socio economic benefits. Provisions of employment, income and foreign exchange, development or expansion of other industries such as handicrafts etc. are some of the important economic benefits provided by the sector. In addition, investments on infrastructural facilities such as transportation, accommodation and other tourist related services lead to an overall development of infrastructure in the economy.

As recorded by Ministry of Hinterland tourism (MoT), Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) in 2019, were 10.93 million with a positive growth rate of 3.5% as compared to 10.56 million in 2018.

The percentage share of Foreign tourist Arrivals in India during March 2019 among the top 15 ports was highest at Delhi Airport (41.58%) followed by Mumbai Airport (14.55%), Chennai Airport (10.08%), Bengaluru Airport (5.86%), Hyderabad Airport (4.85%), Kolkata Airport (4.55%), Cochin Airport (4.25%), Haridaspur Land Check Post (4.01%), Ahmedabad Airport (3.47%), Trivandrum Airport (1.24%), Dabolim (Goa) Airport (1.02%), Gede Land Check Post (0.86%), Amritsar Airport (0.83%), Tiruchirappalli Airport (0.65%), and Agartala Airport (0.64%).

The Ministry in order to have a healthy and sustainable development in looking after holistic development of tourist destinations into world class destinations using a cluster approach including development of infrastructure, amenities, interpretation centres and skill development by achieving synergy and convergence with other Central Ministries, State Governments and other stakeholders.

The ministry in order to support its vision has come up with an innovative approach "Adopt a Heritage" project by which a public, private sector or an individual can adopt the site for developing amenities and facilities under the scheme/programme. In addition to the existing the Swadesh Darshan, PRASAD and HRUDAY schemes the Ministry has come up with creation of "Special Tourist Zones" which have an anchored SPV formed in collaboration/partnership with the States.

In order to overcome 'seasonality' challenge in tourism and to promote India as a 365 days' destination, Ministry has taken the initiative of identifying, diversifying, developing and promoting niche tourism products like cruise, adventure, medical, wellness, golf, polo, meeting incentives conferences & exhibitions (MICE), eco-tourism, film tourism etc.

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3.3 Tourism scenario in Goa

Goa, located in the western part of India, shares its borders with the Arabian Sea to the west, Maharshatra to the South and Karnataka to the south and the east. It is traditionally known as a tourist paradise for its natural scenary, unique beaches and cultural diversity. During 2017, Goa witnessed arrivals of 69,453,84 domestic tourists and 8,58,360 foreign Nature tourists.

Goa has a well-developed social, physical and Industrial infrastructure and virtual connectivity. It has an International airport that is in line with its importance as a globally recognised leisure destination. It also has significant port infrastructure. The state has an established base for the pharmaceuticals industry and an emerging destination for knowledge based industries such as biotechnology and IT.

Innovative marketing strategies to project Goa as an all-time leisure destination have resulted in higher tourist inflows over the years. With continuous inflow of tourists, Russian & European tourists in collaboration with locals from Arambol to Patnem, have started offering yoga training classes to people.

For the year 2023-24, the state government had made an allocation of Rs. 262.85 crores to the tourism sector.

3.4 Current tourism products

Goa, a paradise of scenic charm, located beautifully amidst the sea and lush green landscape, is a dream destination of millions of travellers across the globe. The glistening sands, exotic beaches, architectural splendors of its temples, churches, old Portuguese architecture houses and rich culture has become a popular global leisure destination which attracts domestic & foreign tourists from acoss the globe. Other major tourists' attractions in the region includes the Basilica of Bom Jesus, Fort Aguada, Mangueshi temple, etc.

Hinterland tourism industry is a major engine for the economic growth of the State. Foreign tourists, from across the world visit Goa during their respective winters. The monsoon seasons (off peak) witnesses a large inflow of domestic travelers. The Government of Goa has taken several measures for improving and diversifying tourism activities/products and has made efforts in providing necessary infrastructure.

Places of Nature Enthusiast interest area surrounding proposed site are as follows:

Dudhsagar WaterFalls

Dudhsagar Falls (literally Sea of Milk) is a tiered waterfall located high up on the Mandovi River at the Karnataka border in the southwest part of the park, 10 km (6.2 mi) upstream from Collem Village. At 310 m (1,020 ft), it is Goa's tallest waterfall, India's fifth tallest, and is 227th in the world A viaduct of the South

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Western Railways passes spectacularly through the waterfalls. This popular destination may be reached by hiking along the 10 km one lane dirt road or hiring a 4-wheel drive vehicle at Collem. Access is dangerous and restricted during the monsoon season of June to September.

It's a must visit place for sure and has a beautiful scenery. The best part is the waterfall has all the 12 months fresh water flowing 24/7. It is an indeed natures beauty. The huge span of this waterfall makes you feel the energy and the strength of the nature. Even swimming is possible under this waterfall. There is a railway track right between the waterfall and all passengers of the east bound trains have a glimpse of the majestic falls during their onward and return journeys to Goa . The jeep drive and the travelling experience through the rugged terrain is a bit adventurous. On the way one can see Gaur, mongoose and peacocks too. There are 2 temples encountered during the vehicular journey to the waterfalls. Dudhsagar- A world where the din of the tourist fade and lush greenery and the mellifluous chirping of birds and the sound of the waterfalls takes over.

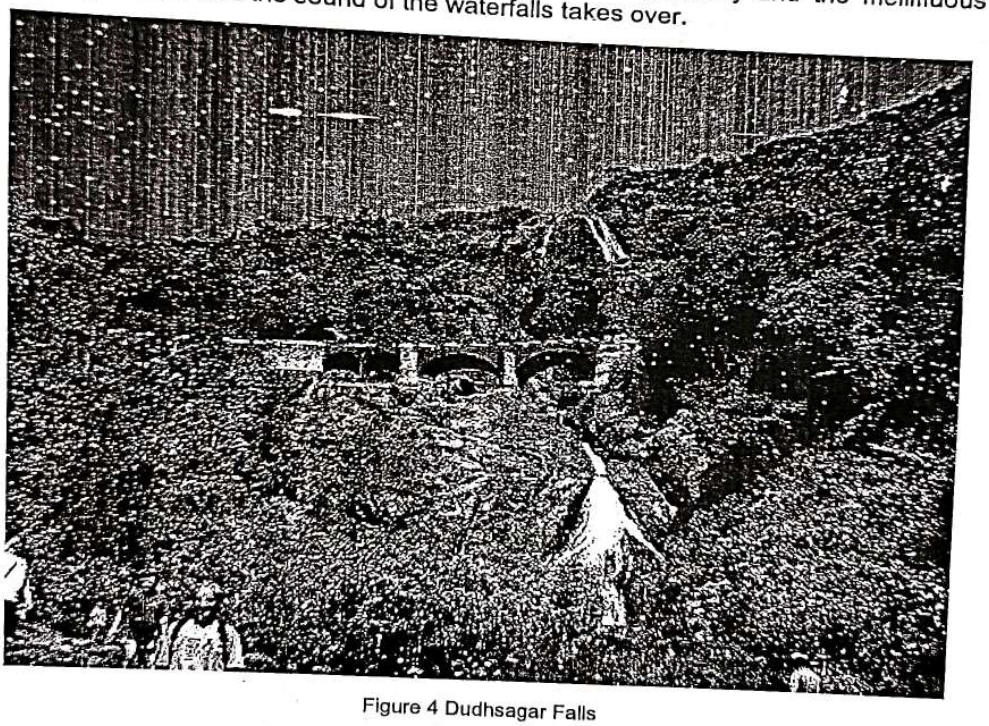

Figure 4 Dudhsagar Falls

Mahadev Temple, Tambdi Surla

Apart from the admirable beaches and waterfalls, Goa is also one of the most sought after destinations for heritage architectures. Goa is an ancient state and so is the architecture found here. Goa is full of offbeat gorgeous villages, one of them is Surla, 66 kms from capital city Panaji and 13 kms from the Mollem National Park. Surla village which comes under Dharbandora taluka is a gem on the Goan crown. It has the typical vibes of offbeat Goan villages, where people believe in simple living style.

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Mahadev Temple, Tambdi Surla is a 12th-century Shiva temple of the Lord Mahadeva and an active place of Hindu worship. It is notable as the oldest temple in Goa the temple was built by Hemadri, the minister of the Yadava King Ramachandra. The Jainstyle construction has led to debates about the origins of the temple, since the Kadamba Dynasty ruled Goa between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. The temple is built in the Hemadpanthi style from basalt, carried across the mountains from the Deccan plateau and carved craftsmen. It is considered to be the only specimen of Kadamba-Yadava architecture in basalt stone preserved and available in Goa. The temple survived invasions and the Goa Inquisition due to its remote location in a clearing deep in the forest at the foot of the Western Ghats which surround the site, which looks like a perfect shot for offbeat places lovers. Surrounded by mountains and a forest of coconut trees, this surreal village can take you in the era of the Portuguese time zone.

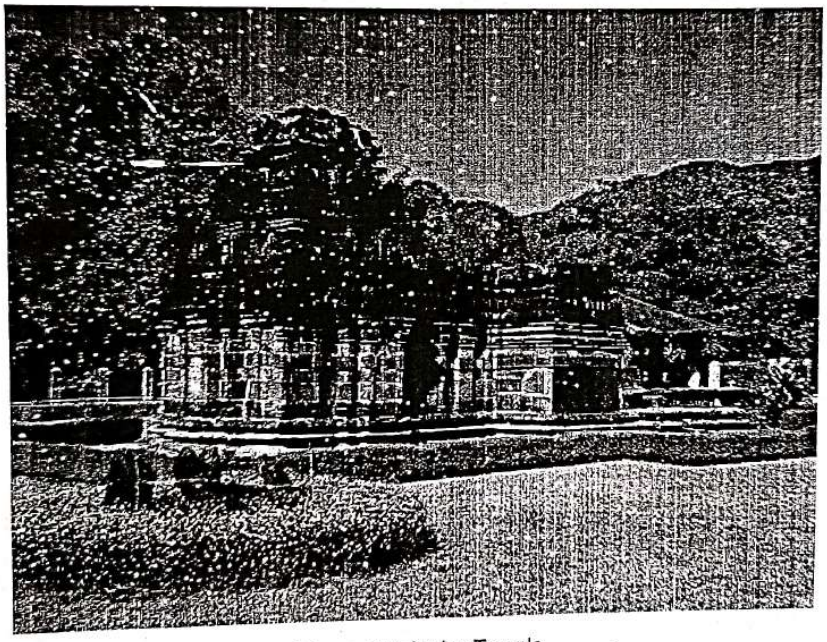

Figure 5 Mahadev Temple

Dudhsagar Plantations

The Dudhsagar plantations have many plants, fruits and spices grown on this relatively small plantation with provision for accommodation for visitors who tour the Mollem area for adventure. The Goan food served is excellent with Cashew feni being also distilled within the plantation. One can enjoy a dip in the natural pool (pond) within the plantation. Overall it is a really enjoyable an unique experience to vsit the plantations.

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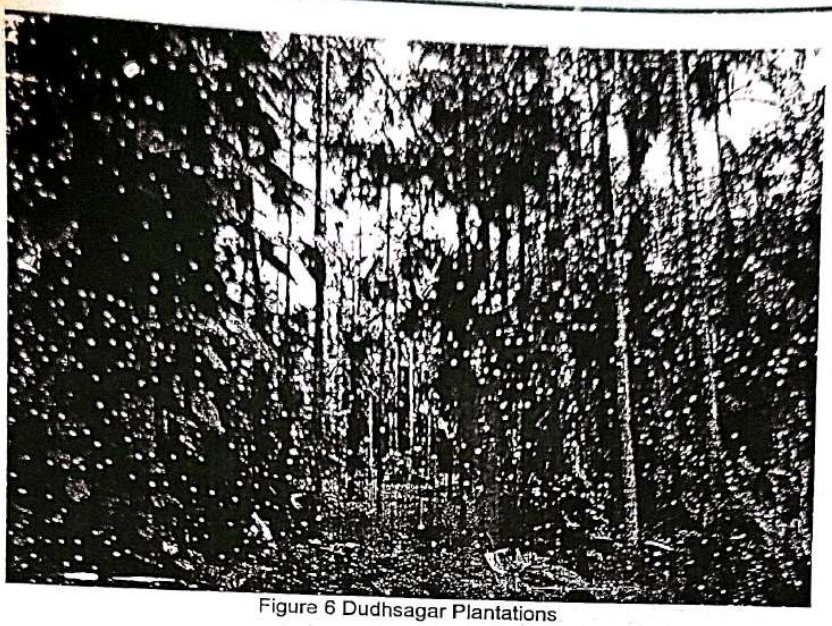

Figure 6 Dudhsagar Plantations

Atreya Vedic & Spice Plantation, Mollem

A visit to the organic spices farm though an entry fee is an amazing experience. With its natural beauty, whichever tree one touches or leaves it appears to smell of the same spice. A typical Goan buffet lunch is served for all the visitors. Visitors can purchase different of spices sold the plantation.

Figure 7 Atreya Spice plantation

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Devil's Canyon

Devils canyon is known as "Devcharacho Kond" in Konkani. Its a picturesque river gorge near Collem situated in a beautiful patch of jungle. It is suicidal for visitors to take a swim in the area due to strong undercurrents and slippery rocks. In addition to its natural beauty and tranquillity, Devil's Canyon is noteworthy for the myth and mythology that surround it.

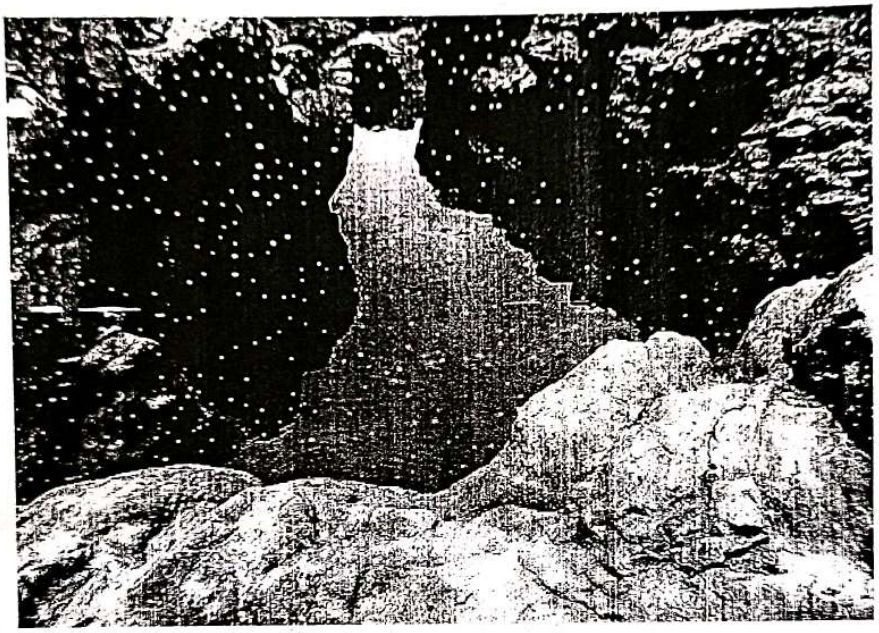

Figure 8 Devil's Canyon

Bhagwan Mahaveer (Mollem) National Park

The Eco-tourism Wing and Nature Interpretation Centre include a wealth of information and artefacts for people interested in learning more about the local flora and animals. Goa's National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary is yet another part of the state's diverse array of attractions, and it should not be missed by animal and wildlife enthusiasts alike. During the rainy season, taking a stroll through the park is a fun way to pass the time. People who want to spend their vacation in the park's beautiful and majestic natural surroundings can do so by staying in nearby accommodations.

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Figure 9 Bhagwan Mahaveer WLS

3.5 Existing hospitality scenario

Goa offers a wide range of accomodation faclities in terms of Star Hotels (63 nos.), Heritage hotels (2 nos) etc. Also, Goa tourism Developemnt Corporation (GTDC) provides accomodation facilities through their hotels/hostels category wise in Goa.

Goa tourism infrastructure offers 4070 numbers of hotels across the state having 78232 beds.

3.6 Current market segments

Mollem at present does not have any pre-defined market segmentation in place. The current market segmentation showcased is based on the site visit observations at Dudhsagar waterfalls and nearby destinations in and around Mollem.

Mollem a waterfall destination is at the border of Karnataka and Goa. The current Nature Enthusiast market can be broadly divided into 4 categories which are elaborated below:

a. Independent waterfall breaks: The independent travellers include International & domestic visitors looking for peace and serene environments whereby they explore places by themselves without any external assisstance.

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The forest area has many virgin beautiful places which are undisturbed by Nature Enthusiasts and these attract International visitors. Also, the intensity of eco-camps are available while travelling to this location.

b. Packaged Beach Breaks: These are the people who travel basically in groups, travel in organised Nature Enthusiast packages and are price conscious. They also include international and domestic Nature Enthusiasts who prefer to relax, enjoy local cuisines, scenic treks etc.

c. Family day trippers: As this is a scenic location it attracts many locals from surrounding cities and towns from Goa and youth from bordering states who remember the Dudhsagar waterfalls. It is also viisted regularly by college students from surrounding towns and cities.

d. Other Nature Enthusiasts: Mollem attracts crowds due to its location setting. They majorly include adventure Nature Enthusiasts from Karnataka and Goa who visit the waterfalls as it is a moderate good trek for the young population.

3.7 Hinterland Tourism Market development

Hinterland tourism at Mollem/Collem can be a significant driver of economic and social development as it stimulates economic growth by generating income and employment. It also generates valuable spin-off's, including ecological conservation, improved infrastructure and local community facilities. However, there is still more room for improvement of statistical systems, making them effective, open and friendly for businesses.

The most challenging area is to focus and improve the overall experience, hinterland tourism infrastructure, information and marketing channels and make it easy in border control, which will stimulate further businesses.

Developing infrastructure for hinterland tourism will definitely help to increase not only inbound tourism, but also domestic and outbound tourism sectors. Development of transport infrastructure is of highest importance for hinterland tourism, trade and transit. It is vital to develop transportation sector as priority for domestic and inbound hinterland tourism. At the same time, air transportation has a huge potential for transit tourist. These developments will depend on policies, which can motivate local population and international community to contribute in varous activities and ventures and gradually create new level of hinterland tourism industries.

While the current Goa International Airport has certain limitation (considering it to be a Naval Airport), the new Manohar International Airport at Mopa would address all gaps including long duration parking (for charter flights), etc.

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4. INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT

4.1 Site visit & Details

Site visits have been undertaken by the team of experts to analyse the present infrastructure status and understand the overall requirement of site. This is of utmost need before the proposal for any development strategy.

The site is accessible through the forest rivulet which is approx. 1.2kms from the Kulem railway station. After crossing the main road, a narrow road on the right connects the proposed site through the Collem village habitation. The proposed site admeasuring an area 20960 sq.m. is a fairly level ground with several medium to large trees within the property. A Nallah abuts the property on the southern side. There is dense vegetation at the site periphery. The site at present has 4 Swiss tents, 4 open huts, 1 dining area, 1 kitchen, 1 protection office, 1 amphitheatre, 1 elevated sitting gallery, 1 overhead tank, 1 well and a pump house inter-connected with pathways and recreational facilities. The existing pathway lighting needs improvement with sombre lighting. Also area for parking and other basic amenities need improvements.

With rapid increase in footfall at present, there is need to augment the Nature Enthusiast facility at the proposed site.

Nature Enthusiast infrastructure at site and nearby:

a. Parking area: There is no designated parking space for Nature Enthusiasts visiting Dudhsagar waterfalls. Currently, Nature Enthusiasts park their vehicles either in private parking spaces or on the village road. The camp needs a dedicated space for parking on the eastern side of the main entrance.
b. Hospitality: There are private operators providing accommodation, lunch and refreshments which are approximately 1km from the proposed site. However the footfall during the weekends being very large, there is congestion within the village and the dining/kitchen area and the tents within the camp need upgradation by refurbishment.
c. Water facility: There is no public water supply within the camp area. However the camp relies on the existing well for the water resource.
d. Power facility: Goa state is 100% electrified and this site is also equipped with power connections. A small solar panel has been installed at site. This would need upgradation
e. Safety and security: To supervise the safety of visitors and wildlife, the forest officers are posted at the site.
f. Hop on hop off buses: GTDC and tourist operators offer various package tours to South Goa & North Goa covering important attractions in Goa. Jungle safaris are a major attraction of the park. Vehicles are allowed inside the reserve and it adds to experience of watching wildlife. Private operators mainly operate to the Dudhsagar falls by Jeep.
g. Trekking facility: There is a dedicated trek route covering the Dudhsagar waterfalls. In addition, the nature guides are available from Mollem & Collem

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village for ease of Nature Enthusiasts. Forest guides are also available for nature trails

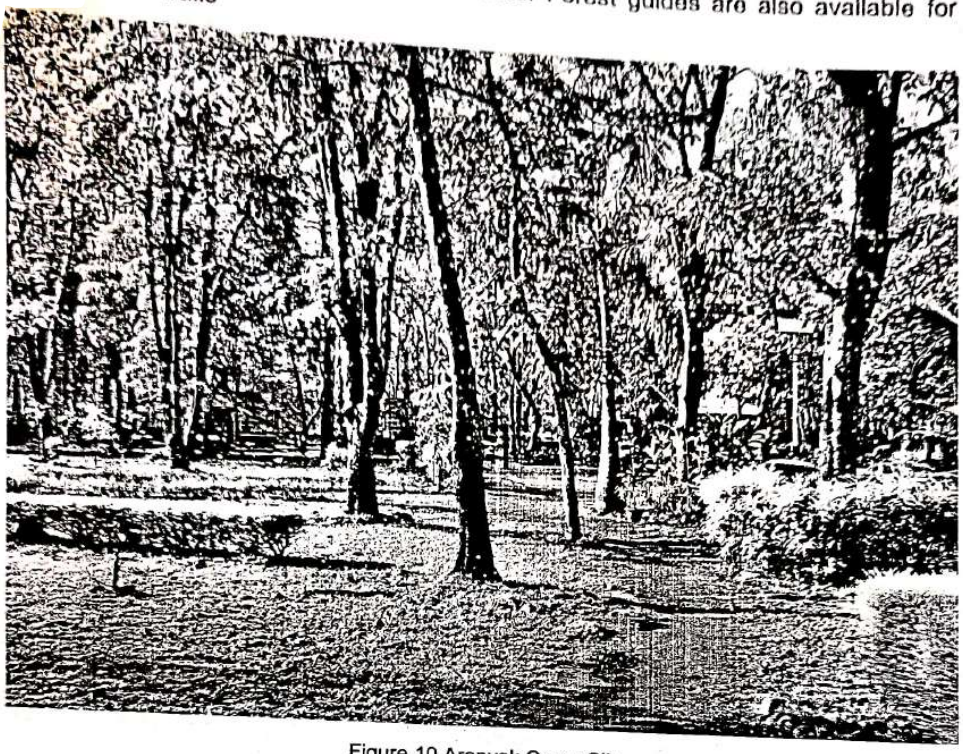

Figure 10 Aranyak Camp Site

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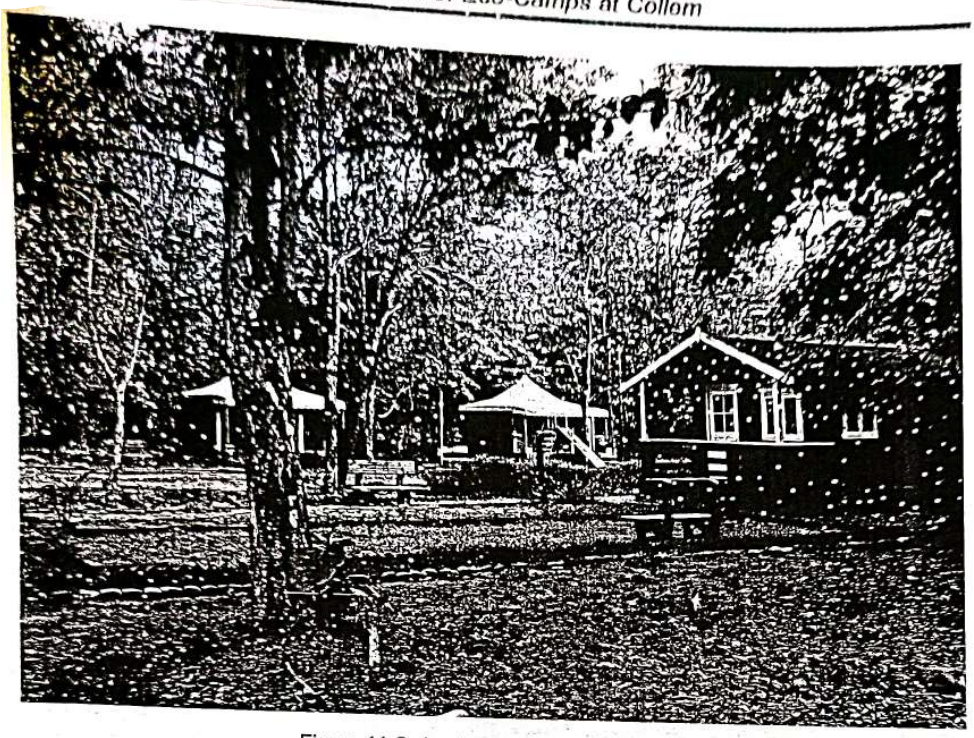

Figure 11 Swiss tents and Protection office

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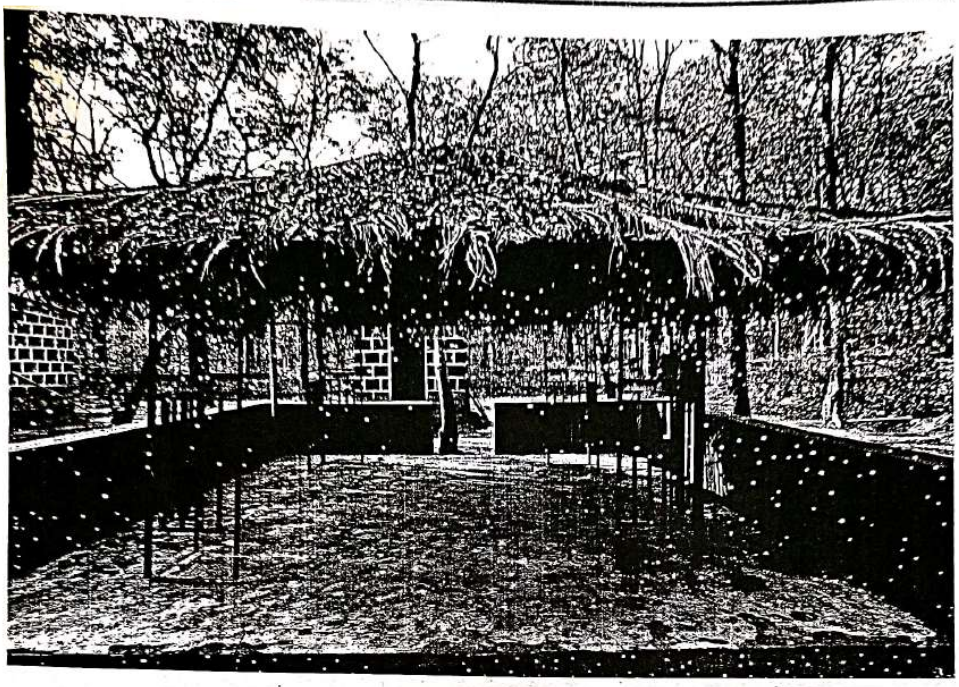

Figure 12 Camp Open Hut with Toilet

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Figure 13 Well and Elevated Sitting gallery

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Figure 14 Existing Recreation facilities

4.2 Major concerns

Based on the overall site visit and consultation with forest officers following are the major issues which need to be addressed which can enhance the hinterland tourism experience at the destination.

Nature Enthusiast facilities: Basic infrastructure like sanitation facilities, parking, dust bins, information boards etc. need to be introduced within the village. The approach road needs to be developed along with illumination of the premises. During night, safety & security needs to be further improvised.

Trek Rejuvenation: The existing treks needs to be managed and demarcated with proper signages. The management and beautification of the trek is a necessary intervention for popularizing the proposed site

Diverse attraction: Nature Enthusiast attraction on the proposed site to be created in order to attract diverse crowds

Operation and management: There should be a separate management plan which needs to be strictly adhered to manage and maintain the surrounding natural setting

Community Engagement: The local community should be benefitted by the employment generation due to proposed developments and the participatory approach should be followed while important decision making pertaining to Collem

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Promotion and advertisement: Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park as an eco-tourism site needs to be aggressively promoted at National & Global level. It has an advantage due to it's attractions and pristine surroundings.

4.3 Overall infrastructure assessment

The study team has carried out physical survey along with forest officials at the site to understand and assess the baseline scenario of the site and the surroundings. Survey details have been obtained through GFDC. Research has been carried out to know the best practices in similar areas and the assessment of the site has also been carried out based on the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, Forest Conservation Rules, 2003, Guidelines for Sustainable Eco-hinterland tourism in Forest and Wildlife areas, 2021 and National strategy and Road map for Sustainable Hinterland tourism, 2021 on indicators of construction of eco-hinterland tourism infrastructure, which are the essential instruments in hinterland tourism planning, management and monitoring processes. The guidelines clearly indicate the type of construction and constraints within the forest area, use of eco-friendly materials etc. The following issues and the respective indicators have been prioritized for sustainable hinterland tourism development.

a. Availability of Information: Potential Nature Enthusiast must be made aware of the place, infrastructure availability (transport options), connectivity, other surrounding attractions, availability of accommodation for all categories, local cuisine, available food courts, trek safety and nature guided trips timing of the day, etc.
   The hinterland tourism needs to be popularized through government websites.
b. Accessibility: Goa is well connected by rail, road and air but the local mode of travel to the destination needs improvement. (GTDC has recently commenced with an APP based taxi services. This is however in its initial stages of operationalization)
   Inadequate Public transportation facility at waterfall destination
c. Diverse attractions: More attractions/diverse hinterland tourism products need to be created with the site development so as to retain Nature Enthusiast for a longer period at the destination. Diverse options unique to Collem needs to be created to make Collem a "must visit" destination of Goa
d. Trek rejuvenation: An approach is required to maintain regular movement of trekkers. There is an immense requirement of revising the trek route and installing the signages at various points, at the start, crossings, etc.
e. Quality infrastructure: Lack of adequate Nature Enthusiast/ Birders infrastructure such as public convenience facilities, signages, parking etc. There is a need to create hinterland tourism infrastructure at the destination, to attract more number of domestic and foreign Nature Enthusiasts.
f. Cleanliness and maintenance: The invitation of Nature Enthusiast to the reserve forest will bring the issue of cleanliness and maintenance. However, adequate solid waste bins and awareness signages need to be installed at various locations along the trek as well as on the proposed site

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g. Safety and security: Forest officers are appointed by the Forest Department for looking at the safety and security of Nature Enthusiast as well the wildlife. There will be a need of additional staff to deploy for guided treks to the waterfall

h. Food: There are no good nearby food facilities available to this destination. There is a need to upgrade the facilities of Restaurant/food court for Nature Enthusiasts which offers quality and hygienic food.

i. Accommodation: Collem has little eco-friendly accommodation facility available in the nearby vicinity. The exclusive facility is needed for the Nature Enthusiasts/ Birders at the proposed site..

j. Local Transportation: Local transportation is an integral part of the hinterland tourism industry. The availability of quality of transportation at the destination has an influence on Nature Enthusiast experience and overall satisfaction. Currently, the site can be only accessed by the private cars/taxi and bikes.

k. Pollution: The proposal of hospitality services will generate a footprint which can disturb the wildlife. There is need of proper planning in order to reduce the pollution to achieve the sustainable environment for wildlife.

l. Sustainable practices: Through promotion of natural power generation and water conservation techniques to reduce dependency.

m. Urban design codes: The construction on the proposed site should adhere the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, Forest Conservation Rules, 2003, Guidelines for Sustainable Eco-hinterland tourism in Forest and Wildlife areas, 2021 and National strategy and Road map for Sustainable Hinterland tourism, 2021. There has to be a standardisation on the type of facades, construction style, materials and need to adhere development control guidelines.

n. Job opportunities: Tourism has created considerable employment opportunities in Goa, especially in coastal areas. Jobs have multiplied in many sectors, especially in the areas of hotel and restaurants, shacks, touring, transport services, internet cafes, souvenir sales etc.

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5. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

5.1 Proposed Development Plan

The proposed Development plan has been prepared based on a holistic approach and sustainable hinterland tourism development strategy, not only at the destination but also for the surrounding.

The development plan suggests major interventions in the proposed area which include additions of 5 Eco-camps, 1 Mini Conference Hall, Pathway development, refurbishment of the Dining and extension, Kitchen and existing camps, Rest rooms for guards, improvement of recreational area including children's play area, solar fencing and development of a parking area. Also it is recommended that at other hinterland tourism adventure facilities available with Government of Goa/ GFDC like development of trek route, Bird trails and waterfall destination maybe taken up. The entrance to the proposed site is through a mud road from forest check post, which will be required to be maintained for proper access to the camp throughout the year.

A management plan has been recommended for management of crowd to this sensitive zone.

The surrounding hinterland tourism potential areas are recommended to be integrated by a Hop on Hop off service which covers the important destinations.

Creating infrastructure for sustainable practices in terms of solar street lighting, solar panels, ground water recharge pits and use of grey water for landscaping is also recommended.

Soft Interventions: Integrated waste management plan, parking system and vehicle tracking system.

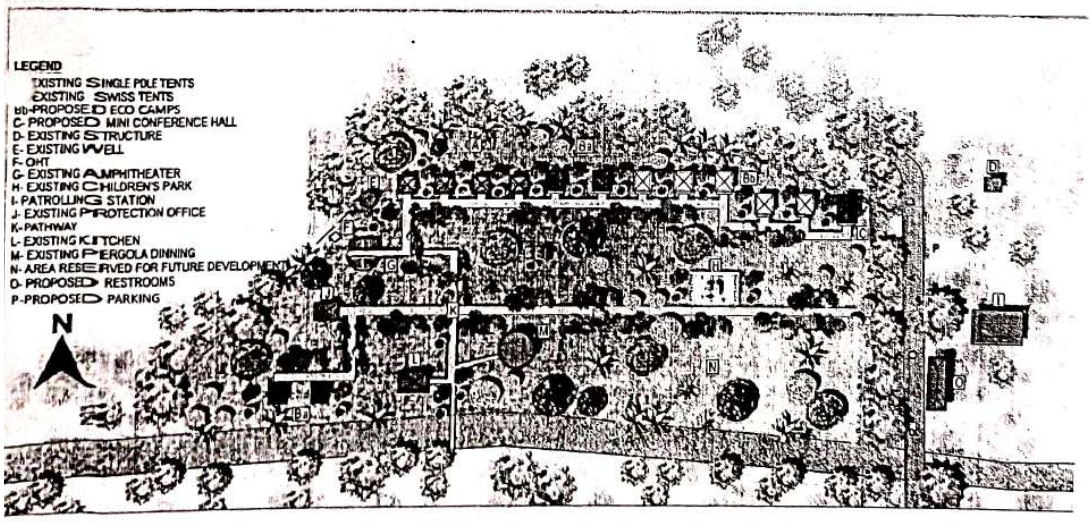

Figure 15 Proposed Conceptual Development Plan

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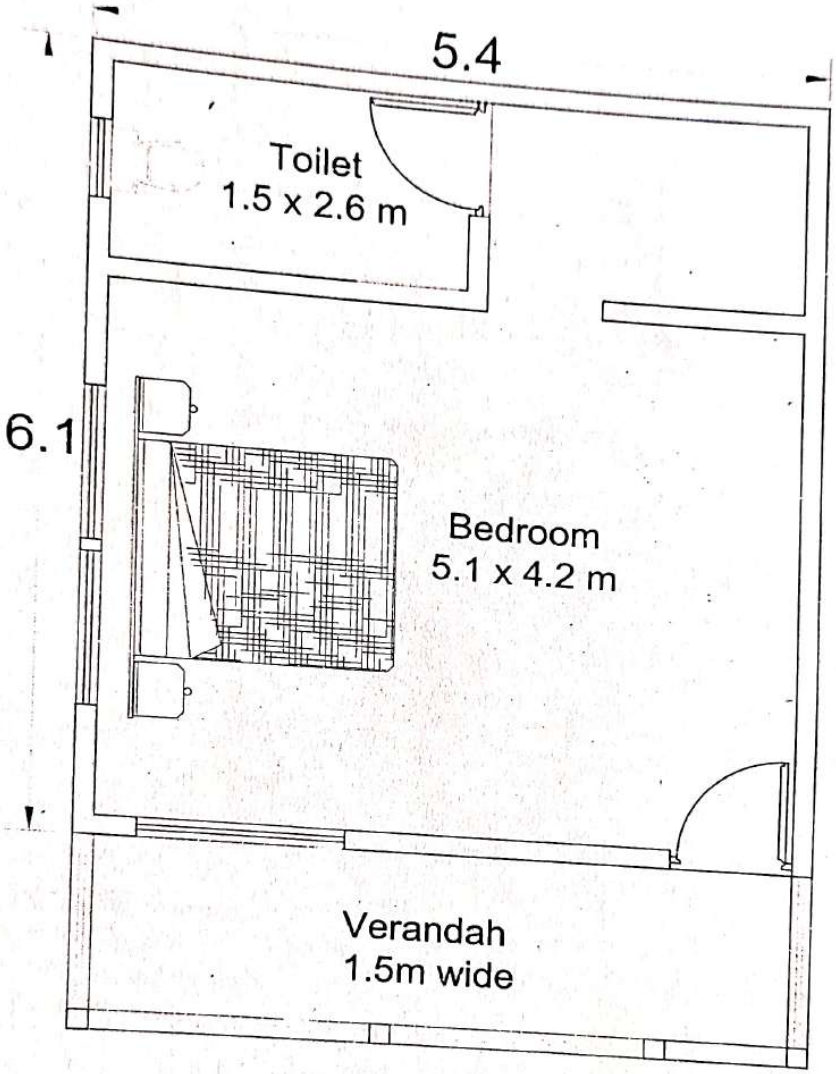

Figure 16 Conceptual Plan of Eco-Camp

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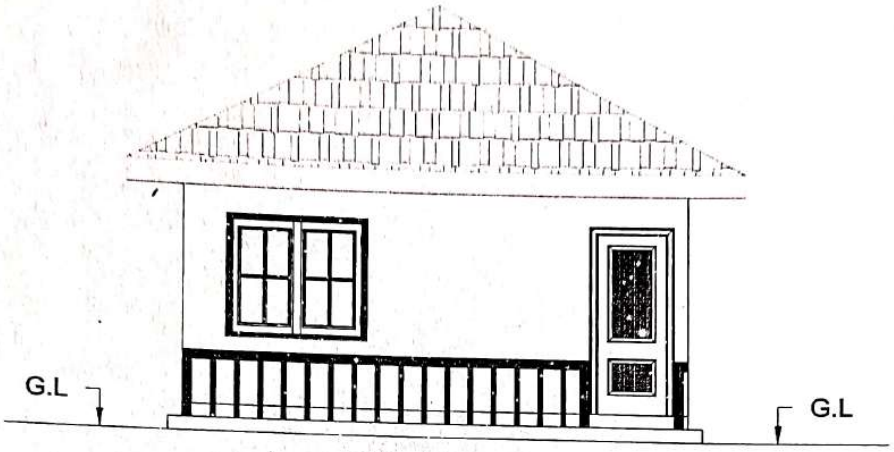

Figure 17 Conceptual Elevation of Eco-Camp

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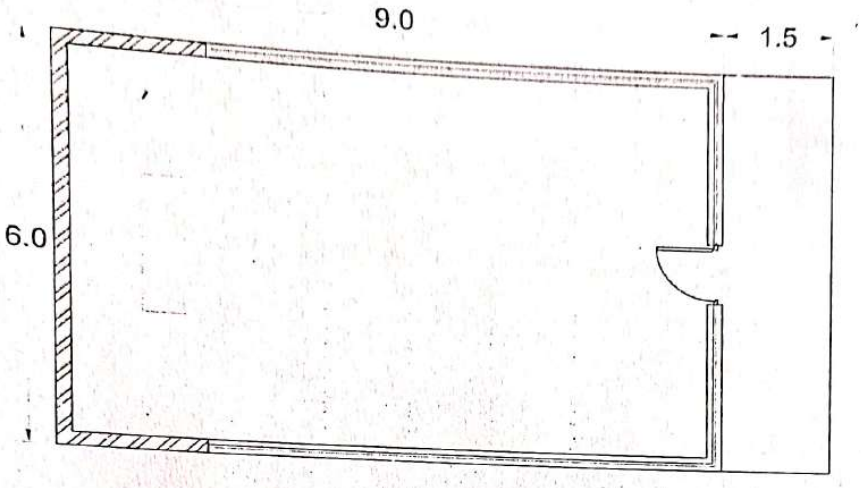

Figure 18 Plan of Mini Conference Hall

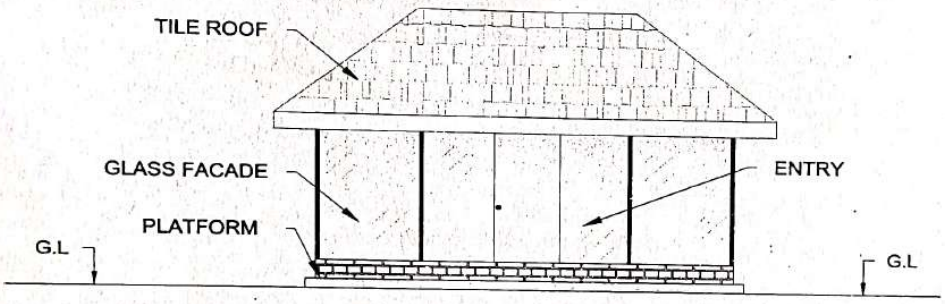

Figure 19 Front Elevation of Mini Conference Hall

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Figure 20 Side Elevation of Mini Conference Hall

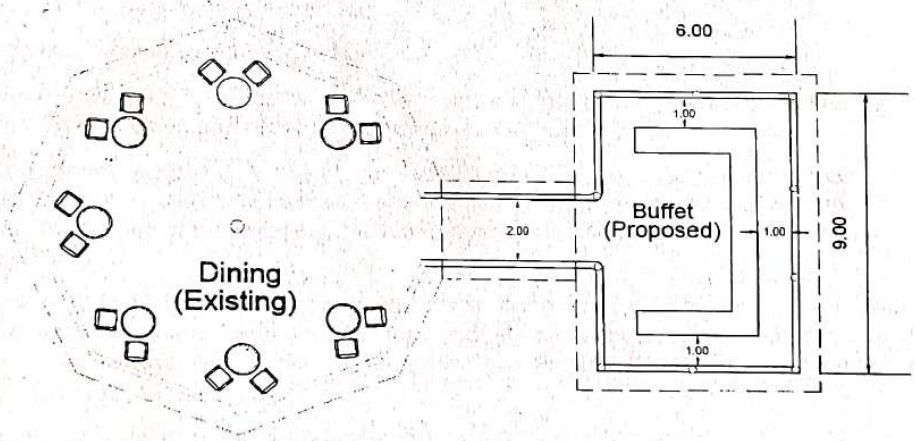

Figure 21 Plan of Dining and Buffet Area

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5.2 Snapshot of proposed Intervention

The proposed intervention is categorised into different categories based on the characteristic of intervention. These interventions are:

Proposed Development

a. Development of eco-camps at the proposed site
b. Providing rest rooms
c. Recreational activities within the proposed site
d. Refurbishing of existing Dining area and extension
e. Refurbishing of existing Kitchen area
f. Approach road improvement
g. Integrated Management plan
h. Pathway development
i. Installation of additional solar panels
j. Digging pits for water recharge
k. Refurbishing of existing external lighting
l. Solar fencing
m. Development of parking area

Proposed Recreational activities

The fair exposure to organised recreational and community based activities would attract Nature Enthusiast to the proposed destination. Activities such as:

Village tour: Scopes will be given to the Nature Enthusiast staying at the eco camps to interact with the local ethnic communities. Nature Enthusiasts/ birders will be taken to remote tribal villages, where they can experience unique lifestyle of the villagers.

Nature treks: Trained nature guides will accompany small groups of Nature Enthusiast for short treks and walks inside the surrounding forests/areas of the respective zones giving the opportunity to explore the virgin wilderness and unpolluted scenic landscape.

Bird watching: Bird life in and around forest will offer Nature Enthusiast/ Birders an ample scope for bird watching. A trained guide having knowledge of local bird species will be provided to the willing bird watchers.

Guided wildlife safari by vehicles: Vehicles will take small groups of Nature Enthusiast to the core areas of the protected forests for wildlife viewing. An expert guide will accompany the group of maximum 6 persons in each vehicle. Nature beyond will arrange all necessary permission from the forest department.

Guided waterfalls tours by vehicles: Vehicles will take small groups of Nature Enthusiast to Dudhsagar within the protected forests for viewing of the waterfalls. An expert guide will accompany the group of maximum 6 persons in each vehicle.

Other Interventions

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IT Intervention: Hop on hop off bus/vehicle tracking system, smart poles, street light sensors and GPS based trackers for children and disabled person

Training: Training and skill development program for guides and hinterland tourism service providers.

Promotion and Advertisement: There are various ways that can promote the establishment of eco-camps such as festivals like Serendipity, Carnival etc., GFDC website, tour packages, cross marketing (Marketing at other Nature Enthusiast destinations), Nature Enthusiast/ Birders information boards at airports, bus stands, railway stations, and Marketing at International/ National travel marts.

Institutional Interventions: Integrated waste management system, Nature Enthusiast/ Birders circulation plan and listing of guides

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5.3 Preliminary costing

S.no	Item	Area	Unit	Unit Cost	Overall cost
1	Eco-Camps (5 nos.)	41	sq.m.	45,000	92,25,000.00
2	Mini Conference Hall	54	sq.m.	45,000	24,30,000.00
3	Rest Rooms	50	sq.m.	30000	15,00,000.00
4	Camp Site development	400		250	1,00,000.00
5	Dining facility refurbishing			Lumpsum	5,00,000.00
6	Dining facility extension	54		20,000	10,80,000.00
7	Pathway development	320	sq.m.	1,500	4,80,000.00
8	External Illumination			Lumpsum	8,00,000.00
9	Drainage & sewerage			Lumpsum	8,00,000.00
10	Water supply/OHT			Lumpsum	5,00,000.00
11	Solar fencing	645	rm	3600	23,22,000.00
12	Miscellaneous			Lumpsum	2,00,000.00
Total					**1,99,37,000.00**
Approximate Cost (Based on GSR 2023 Rates and FMR)					1,99,37,000.00
Add 3% contingencies					5,98,110.00
Add 3.2% Consultancy					6,37,984.00
Add 18% GST					38,11,156.92
Total					2,49,84,250.92
Say					**2.50 Crores**

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5.4 Revenue generation model

The revenue generation model for proposed eco camps at Collem will include income from 9 Eco-Camps, 4 Open huts, Mini Conference hall, restaurant and tour guide operator. The expenses include personnel salaries, Operation and maintenance of Eco-camps and restaurant.

The income and expenditure statement shows the incremental growth for first 3 years and consistent growth after third year. The surplus can be achieved higher than the shown figures if right measures of publicity in term of tour packages etc.is taken care of.

Income statement

	Particulars	Assump.	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	Renting of Eco-Camps						
	Total No. of Eco-Camps and Open Huts	9 +4					
	Occupancy		50%	55%	60%	60%	60%
	No. of Guests	Eco-Camps Open Huts	3285 1460	3613.5 1606	3942 1752	3942 1752	3942 1752
A]	**Revenue from Eco-Camps**	**2500**	**8215420**	**9398440**	**10662958**	**11089476**	**11533055**
	Food court Revenue						
	Hotel Guests		3285	3613.5	3942	3942	3942
	Outside Guests	Weekday - 5 Weekend - 15	2,870	2,870	2,870	2,870	2,870
	No. of Meals		9440	10097	10754	10754	10754
	Rate per Meal	200	200	208	216.32	224.97	233.97
B]	**Revenue from the Food court**		**2150800**	**2419040**	**2705298**	**2813510**	**2926050**
	Renting of Area						
	Renting of Tour Guide	5,000	60,000	62,400	64,896	67,492	70,192

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5.4 Revenue generation model

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The income and expenditure statement shows the incremental growth for first 3 years and consistent growth after third year. The surplus can be achieved higher than the shown figures if right measures of publicity in term of tour packages etc.is taken care of.

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	Renting of Eco-Camps						
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		Open Huts	1460	1606	1752	1752	1752
A]	**Revenue from Eco-Camps**	**2500**	**8215420**	**9398440**	**10662958**	**11089476**	**11533055**
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	Area						
	Renting of Mini Conference Hall	5,000	60,000	62,400	64,896	67,492	70,192
C]	**Revenue from the Leasing of Space/Serv**		**120000**	**124800**	**129792**	**134984**	**140383**
	TOTAL REVENUE		**10223420**	**11623416**	**13119055**	**13643817.41**	**14189570.11**

Expenditure statement

	Particulars	Assump.	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A]	Personnel Expenses	316000	3792000	3943680	4101427	4265484	4436104
B]	O&M of the Eco-Camps	35%	2875397	3289454	3732035	3881317	4036569
C]	O&M of Restaurant	50%	944000	1050088	1163153	1209679	1258066
	Total Expenditure		**7611397**	**8283222**	**8996615**	**9356480**	**9730739**

Income and expenditure statement

	Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A]	Revenue	**10223420**	**11623416**	**13119055**	**13643817.41**	**14189570.11**
B]	Expenditure	**7611397**	**8283222**	**8996615**	**9356480**	**9730739**
C]	**Surplus**	**2612023**	**3340194**	**4122440**	**4287338**	**4458831**

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5.5 Sustainable practices

Forests are dynamic and open ecosystems. They provide a natural habitat for a vast range of animals, plants and other living organisms, allowing them to thrive. In terms of their own functioning, forests embed the principle of circularity. They provide commercially valuable renewable wooden materials and goods, regulate critical global cycles (in particular the oxygen, nitrogen, carbon and water cycles) and play a vital role in soil conservation. Furthermore, forests play an indispensable multifunctional role in climate, environment and biodiversity protection. They provide a variety of important ecosystem services, such as clean air, water flow regulation and flood control, carbon sequestration and storage, soil protection from water and wind erosion and natural resilience to the effects of climate change. Forests protect livelihoods, communities and infrastructure. They contribute to the sustainable development of rural economies, which promotes integrated territorial development and economic and social cohesion, and is vital to the well-being of rural communities. Forests provide subsistence, employment opportunities and income to about 25% of the world's population.

It is an individual responsibility to promote sustainable practices while proposing infrastructure on forest land. This will not only build the infrastructure self-sustainable but also reduce pollution on the forest land. One of the unsaid sustainable practice is to control the footprint to minimum so that is does not disturb the forest habitants.

The sustainable practices are proposed:

a. Solar street light: The external lights will be powered through solar energy throughout the year except for 4 months of monsoon
b. Water recharge pits: The water recharge pits will be placed at the southern side which will collect the storm water running from drains. This will help in recharging the ground water for local use.
c. Compost pits: All the wet waste collected will be transferred to the compost pits which will produce manure for maintaining the proposed landscape
d. Waste management practices: Four major parameters of waste management will be practiced and infrastructure will be created for segregation, collection, transportation and disposal of dry waste adhering to the guidelines of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)
e. Sombre lightings: The illumination at the proposed eco-camps will be kind of dimmed lighting without disturbing the movement of forest habitants.
f. Sustainable storm water runoff: The pathways and pavements are designed for ingress and flow of rainwater and reduce storm water runoff from the plot to replenish ground water supply and charging pits.
g. Solar Lighting: Solar lighting reduces the impact on the environment and significantly reduces the energy bills. It helps in green credentials, silent and space saving.

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6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The development of proposed site as Eco-Camps is expected to have its own impact on the socio-economic development and socio-demographic strategy for a specific region would involve integrating the current strengths of the region viz. existing natural strength etc. with the overall vision of developing the region into a sustainable Nature Enthusiast center. The proposed development will create opportunities for local population and shall also focus on skill upgradation through trainings of predominantly women and youth populace.

India has vast forest zones and the Ministry for Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India, with the objective of protecting ecological conditions of the reserve forest, formulated the Forest Conservation guidelines.

Considering the current status, the proposed development plan has been made conservatively, duly considering the currently applicable forest conservation guidelines. In the view of the proposed development an assessment has been carried out to understand the socio-economic impact that the proposed development would have on the surrounding region. While proposing the Development plan, due care has been taken for ensuring the proposed development is within the current hinterland tourism theme and environmentally sustainable.

The project is proposed to create direct job opportunities for approximately 20 personnel who will be working on daily basis. Additionally, approximately 10 staff will get indirect employment in terms of trekking guides which are directly associated with the forest officials. Other than the direct association, large number of population will get impacted with the development such as the transportation, hospitality, health, etc.

6.1 Background

Collem village has a spectacular waterfall at Dudhsagar that has been attracting Nature Enthusiast nationally. Site is located in the interiors of Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park overlooking the waterfall. Site falls at the Goa – Karnataka border of Dharbandora Taluka 15° 40' 3" N and 74° 10' 27" E, Located at about 68km east of State's Capital, Panaji. It falls in the jurisdiction limit of Goa Forest Department, which is also the approving body for development works.

As per census of 2011, the total households in Collem village are 402 and total population of the village is 1772 persons (858 – Male and 914 – Female).

However, considering that the socio-economic impact for the proposed development is not limited to only Collem village, but would also spill over to the neighbouring and surrounding villages, a brief assessment on the availability of critical infrastructure was made for the region. Education infrastructure is available till primary school within 2-10 kms radius, degree colleges are beyond 10 kms distance depending upon the curriculum preference.

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In terms of health care facilities, a primary health sub centre is within the village. The community health centre is more that 30kms away from the village.

6.2 Impacts of Hinterland tourism

For decades, hinterland tourism industry growth has been a major contribution to increased economy across the world. The range of impacts from hinterland tourism is broad and often influences areas beyond those commonly associated with tourism.

As, Collem being an eco-tourism destination the impacts of hinterland tourism will be majorly on Socio-economy of the region, which has both positive and negative impacts. However, specific development plans and actions can increase hinterland tourism benefits and decrease the gravity of negative impact. The villages in the vicinity will get highly impacted with the development and increase in Nature Enthusiasts will create opportunities mainly for personnel in services sector.

6.3 Socio Economic Assessment

Globally, Hinterland tourism plays a major role in employment and economic activities around a Nature Enthusiast site and economies of certain provinces at times depend on hinterland tourism alone. While, Collem is already gifted with a scenic beauty and waterfall in Goa, its potential for economic development has limitedly been tapped till date.

The local employment in the hinterland tourism industry is sizable either through self-employment (Eco-camps, Food courts, Shacks, Souvenir stores, Taxis, Car & Bike rentals, etc.) and employment at star hotels, camps, tours and travels etc.

The interventions suggested in this report include drawing significant unique facilities for Nature Enthusiasts for making it a "Must Visit" camp from its current status of "just another waterfall on Goa".

With the initiative of the Goa Forest Development Corporation for development & promotion of Collem as an Eco-tourism destination lies the key to unlock the opportunity for Socio-economic development of the region through inclusiveness.

The following ideas in the Development Plan have been perceived with the objective for increasing the footfalls of Nature Enthusiast, retention of Nature Enthusiast and thus boosting of economic activities through creation of employment opportunities for locals and higher spending by Nature Enthusiast/ Birders to Collem/ Mollem:

- Development of additional activities for attracting larger footfall and retention of Nature Enthusiast
- Developing Collem as a MUST VISIT destination and an evening/ overnight destination.

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- Employment generation from various activities proposed under the development plan
- Education and training in various hinterland tourism related skills including Hospitality, Travel etc. through various educational platforms.
- A major focus on inclusiveness & local employment generation in the Agenda of the proposed project.

6.4 Socio Economic Impact

Hinterland tourism has long been identified as one of the major drivers for employment & economic activities in our country.

The Socio- economic development of the region is envisaged to not only provide direct and in-direct employment opportunities in abundance but also provide better access to higher education, health care facilities, infrastructure and equal opportunity for economic growth of the beneficiaries.

The interventions suggested are envisaged to mitigate the current issues and bridge the gaps for exposure of locals to the Hinterland Tourism Sector and opportunities therein through training and skills development.

Considering that the development proposed has laid its entire focus of sustainable growth, the Socio-Economic Development is envisaged to be with the focus on inclusiveness and thus impacting positively.

6.5 Hinterland tourism Impact

Hinterland tourism can generate both positive and negative effects on the areas where visiting and leisure activities take place. It can be a positive element for the local economy of the Nature Enthusiast destination, but it can also generate some externalities (positive or more frequently, negative) that are not included in the local economic balance and that can affect the quality of the visitors' experience. Therefore, it is important that hinterland tourism planning assures good level of conservation of natural resources and mitigates the impacts that hinterland tourism necessarily entails.

Impacts related to hinterland tourism activities can be divided into two main categories:

1. Impacts due to the building of hospitality structures (Eco-camps, Restaurant, camping sites) and the production of goods and services for Nature Enthusiast leading to resource depletion, emissions, air pollution etc.

2. Impacts due to the presence of Nature Enthusiasts and, generally, to their activities in the area leading to production of solid waste, air pollution, noise pollution, traffic, crowding, etc.).

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Therefore, proposed development should be based on robust analysis of environmental, social and economic conditions of the area without impacting the habitat and evaluation of existing physical, economic and social limits to current and potential development of Nature Enthusiast activities.

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7. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) is the Nodal agency for implementing the proposed project and for release of funds after receiving the sanctioned grants.

The project is scheduled for 12 months after sanction of the funds.

7.1 Operation And Maintenance Of Project Assets
Authorization to Operate and Maintain Project Assets

Subject to and in accordance wih the terms and conditions set forth in Agreement signed between GFD & GFDCL, GFD has grants and authorizes GFDCL the right to operate and maintain the Project Assets, to exercise and/or enjoy the rights, powers, benefits, privileges, and authorizations and entitlements as set forth in this Agreement including the right to collect, retain and appropriate all tariffs, fees, and charges for the facilties and services provided.

In consideration of the rights, privileges and benefits conferred upon by GFD and other good and valuable consideration expressed herein, GFDCL hereby undertakes to perform/discharge all of its obligations in accordance with the provisions hereof.

7.2 Rights and Use of the Project Asset

GFDCL shall have the right to management and use of Project Assets in accordance with the provisions of the Applicable Law and for this purpose it may regulate the entry into and use of the same by third parties.

7.3 Alterations, Modifications and Additional Facilities

GFDCL shall be at liberty to carry out necessary alterations or modifications to the Project Assets or undertake new construction in order to meet their obligation of providing the facilities and services at its own costs.

GFDCL may engage suitably qualified agencies/contractors/third-parties for the operation of permitted activities at the Project activities. However, GFDCL shall not sub-lease or transfer the operation, maintenance and utilization of the Project Assets to any other party.

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Annexure – Guidelines of Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Forest & Wildlife Areas 2021

(Ref: F.No. 1-57/2014 WL (Part-8) dated 29th October, 2021 from MoEF&CC, Wildlife Division, Government of India)

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Guidelines on Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Forest and Wildlife Areas 2021

1. BACKGROUND

Forests and wildlife are elements of nature and inseparable parts of the environment. Because of the intricate nature of interface between nature and human beings, nature conservation entails interactions with people as a central concept. Such interaction includes not only the forest fringe dwellers but also those who are living away from the forests for the purpose of creating experience for the visitors. Eco-tourism may be developed in and around designated sites in forest and wildlife rich areas and ex-situ conservation areas, and such designated sites may include sites of biological, geographical, geo-physical and eco-heritage importance such as mangroves, sacred groves, mudflats, beaches, streams, wetlands, waterfalls, rivers, hills, caves, etc.

Eco-tourism has the potential to create significant opportunities for building public awareness and mass movement towards conservation of nature and natural resources while expanding overall returns to the economy, improving skill base, creating new knowledge and green jobs, and improving the livelihoods of the local communities.[1] On the other hand, eco-tourism if not practiced in a science-based manner may adversely affect nature on a permanent basis. The Guidelines on Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Forest and Wildlife Areas 2021 (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines or the Eco-Tourism Guidelines), therefore, lays the framework for practising and promoting sustainable eco-tourism by maximising outputs that support nature and natural resources in their original forms while minimising any negative externalities arising out of interactions between people and nature.

The Guidelines recognise that besides the popular sites located in Protected Areas, which presently number over 900 across the country, many potential eco-tourism sites are located in public, community and private forests outside the Protected Areas as well. These Guidelines shall be applicable to ecotourism sites falling in all forest and wildlife areas irrespective of the ownership of the land.

2. GOAL

The overall goal of these Guidelines is promoting better understanding of nature and wildlife conservation while generating income and opportunities for the local communities in an ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable manner.

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3. OBJECTIVES

The Guidelines seek to achieve the following objectives:

i. Promote low impact nature tourism which ensures ecological integrity of the eco-tourism sites and its environment;

ii. Promote biodiversity, traditional ecological knowledge and heritage values of India's wilderness;

iii. Promote engagement of local communities in nature tourism in a manner that enriches local economy and encourages sustainable use of indigenous materials through financially viable value chains thereby helping such local communities become "*AtmaNirbhar*"

iv. Promote partnerships amongst stakeholders for mobilising resources and developing and promoting nature tourism, as well equitable sharing of benefits.

v. Enhancing potential of India as a global eco-tourism destination.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ECO-TOURISM

(i) Eco-tourism planning: Eco-tourism shall be promoted on the basis of science based planning. The plan shall form part of the duly approved Working Plan or Management Plan or Conservation Plan of the forest or wildlife area as the case may be, and shall include the carrying-capacity analysis based description of the eco-tourism site, time, duration, route, mode of travel and number of persons for visitations, and any support infrastructure needed. Wherever feasible, the eco-tourism plan will also be dovetailed with the *Gram Panchayat* Development Plan. The Protected Area (PA) manager along with a third party shall determine the carrying-capacity of eco-tourism site by taking into account the wide diversity of environmental, physical, social and economic criteria of development and management of eco-tourism sites as well as institutional capacities of their managers. The Eco-tourism plan needs to also factor in aspects of control of plastic pollution, waste management, noise pollution, sewage treatment and disposal, etc. The Eco-Tourism guidelines issued by the National Tiger Conservation Authority shall be applicable to Eco-tourism in Tiger Reserves in the country.

(ii) Eco-tourism zonation: The eco-tourism plan shall appropriately demarcate the eco-tourism zone upon assessment of management requirements of the target wildlife, the habitat or the geographical entity, and their behavioural and ecological characteristics. The eco-tourism zonation shall particularly ensure that the ecological integrity of the site, including breeding areas of wildlife and tribal habitations particularly PVTGs remains protected. The zonation shall also ensure that safeguards provided in the Forest Rights Act, 2006 are fully respected.

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(iii) Resource mobilisation and community participation: The local community shall be the key stakeholder of eco-tourism. Central government will provide for participatory frameworks that encourage resource mobilisation by a group of stakeholders in development, operation and maintenance of eco-tourism zones. These frameworks shall ensure that equitable benefits flow from eco-tourism accrues, besides resource investors, to local communities, tribals and other traditional forest dwellers including by way of enhanced livelihood opportunities. Further, keeping in view that most eco-tourism sites are located in remote places and small-scale operators predominate, suitable programme may be taken up by the Central Government to facilitate eco-tourism operators to access incentives allowed to the tourism sector in a timely and adequate manner.

(iv) Eco-tourism site development: The Eco-tourism site shall be developed only in eco-tourism zone and in eco-friendly manner. While developing support infrastructure for eco-tourism it shall be ensured that the natural profile and ecological integrity of the ecotourism site including its biodiversity value is maintained. Any ecotourism facility or structure on forest lands shall be subject to the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. However, no permanent structure shall be made /constructed to create ecotourism facility/structure, but temporary structures/facility made predominantly of natural material of local origin may be allowed in Protected Area or on forest land. Such ecotourism facility/structure shall be part of the approved Working Plan/Management Plan/Working Scheme. Home stay managed by local communities on non-forest land shall be promoted. States may develop benchmarks/ standardized criteria based on site specificity, for adoption of best practices in eco-tourism including sustainable ecological management of the site, customer satisfaction, harmony with local culture and design, local construction material used, employment types, environmental education facilities. Further, safety measures, especially for managing fire, flood, landslide, needs to be inbuilt into the ecotourism site development plan and adequate system needs to be in place for efficiently managing such disasters.

(v) Inter-sectoral synergy: The central government will work towards prioritisation of action with regard to developing eco-tourism sites across the country and improving the way in which action on eco-tourism is coordinated with other sectors and synergies are exploited in the best possible manner. Regulations should be streamlined wherever possible and processes and procedures should be simplified while taking into consideration the objectives of relevant sectoral policies.

(vi)Promoting eco-tourism entrepreneurship: Concerted action will be taken for expanding entrepreneurship opportunities for stakeholders engaged in eco-tourism with due priority to the members of local communities and those whose livelihoods have been impacted because of actions such as closure of the Protected Area for forest product extraction. The focus will be on increasing productivity, boosting the skills and competencies of stakeholders at all levels, and the needed structural changes will be supported and strengthened. Start-ups will be supported through training, coaching, financial support and other benefits including through the incubators established under various government programmes.

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5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The following are the broad framework for implementation of the Eco-tourism Guidelines:

Strategy i: Identification of potential sites: Each State may identify sites for eco-tourism through a participatory process involving stakeholders, particularly the local communities, and make a priority list for development of such sites. Area managers will initiate eco-tourism planning based on carrying-capacity analysis, including identification of eco-tourism zones, identification of potential partners, categorisation of infrastructure support that may be allowed, funding sources, and training and capacity building needs of the partners through a multi-stakeholder dialogue process. Spatially cluster approach to eco-tourism infrastructure will be promoted to larger blocks of contiguous habitats so as to minimise adverse ecological impacts on a larger area. An indicative list of potential eco-tourism sites is at Annexure I. However, States/UTs may develop ecotourism sites which has high potential.

An Eco-tourism Plan shall be prepared for every eco-tourism site. The Plan shall be approved and prepared for sites under various controls as follows:

i. For Sites within forest/protected areas: The Eco-tourism Plan for the areas falling inside the notified forest/protected areas shall form part of duly approved Working Plan/Management Plan/ Working Scheme.

ii. For Sites falling within Eco-sensitive Zones: All new Eco-tourism activities or expansion of existing tourism activities within the Eco-sensitive Zone (on non-forest land) shall be as per the Tourism Master Plan for the Eco-sensitive Zone. The Eco-tourism Master Plan shall be prepared by Department of Tourism in consultation with State Departments of Environment and Forests. The Tourism Master Plan shall form a component of the Zonal Master Plan and until the Zonal Master Plan is approved, development for tourism and expansion of existing tourism activities shall be permitted by the concerned regulatory authorities based on the actual site specific scrutiny and recommendation of the Monitoring Committee. Hotel/resort or commercial establishment construction shall be taken up inside the Eco-sensitive Zone as per the ESZ notification of the National Park/Sanctuary.

Strategy ii: **Funding support:** Compatible funding instruments that cater to the specific challenges of the eco-tourism sector, particularly the small and geographically fragmented nature of enterprises, is key to sustainable eco-tourism promotion. Financial institutions may be encouraged to develop targeted financial instruments for the eco-tourism entrepreneurs at the local level. Public funding for eco-tourism promotion, monitoring and innovation may be made available, including for non-repayable loans and guarantees, start-up grants and marketing of eco-tourism places.

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Strategy iii: Usage of Information Technology: The role of digitalisation both as a driver and an enabler of eco-tourism shall be recognised. In particular, digitalisation will be used to facilitate new eco-tourism products, such as virtual tours, competitive exploration, etc., services, business processes and models. National and sub-national projects will be launched to undertake analysis of the needs of various partners and users (visitors) of eco-tourism projects, and develop scenarios for eco-tourism support for the future, and active steps will be taken for transfer of knowledge to partners including by making such knowledge public wherever feasible. In recognition of the fact that partners (e.g. service providers) in eco-tourism are mainly small entities, and their limited capabilities of using digital services combined with possible use of multitude of digital platforms and inability to create economies of scale, pose significant challenge. National and sub-national level data integration platforms to analyse visitors behaviour and preferences will be developed, and additional sources such as social media engagement, newsletter statistics, booking data, media and marketing reports, etc will be used.

Strategy iv: Capacity building: Despite wider and growing attraction to eco-tourism, the challenges emanating from the field such as geographically fragmented and small nature of sites, small business structure and high seasonality and the consequent visitor number fluctuation, are significant. On the other hand, it offers significant entrepreneurial and labour market opportunity for the local communities. With increased numbers of eco-tourism sites the eco-tourism sector may become a supplier of low return exchangeable standard products making private investment in eco-tourism less attractive. The capacity of field functionaries of different stakeholders, especially the eco-tourism site managers and the local communities, will be steadily built to innovate and meet the present and future challenges of the sector, and international best practices as suited to local conditions will be internalised. Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and other such institutes will be encouraged to develop specific programmes for local communities and small operators engaged in eco-tourism.

Strategy v: Benefit sharing: Community-based tourism will be promoted as a preferred form of eco-tourism. While eco-tourism will create new wage employment and private entrepreneurial income for the respective stakeholders, fair and equitable benefit sharing of common eco-tourism revenues with the local community is key to sustainability. Given the diversity of stakeholders, scale of operations and geographically fragmented nature of eco-tourism sites, appropriate mechanisms for sharing of benefits with the local eco-development committees / forest protection committees will be developed by the respective State Government for different types of eco-tourism sites falling on government lands. Such benefit sharing mechanisms shall recognise that the local community has the highest stake in eco-tourism and the revenue generated has to be also ploughed back for development and maintenance of the eco-tourism sites. Transparent mechanism for revenue collection from common eco-tourism activities user charges, entry fees, concessions, fines and penalties, etc. through a Foundation established at the appropriate local level, and sharing of revenue with stakeholders, particularly local communities, has served as best practise in many parts of the world and the same duly incorporated by the respective State governments. Considering that

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eco-tourism is mostly a seasonal activity, the Eco-Tourism Plans should include measures to reduce financial overdependence of the local community on eco-tourism, and the same should be supported by the district level plan approval committees. Such measures may include capacity building of the communities with respect to processing and marketing of bio-cultural products to ensure that communities remain attached to preservation of local ecology. The Central government will support development of such mechanisms through sharing of international experiences and coordination with participating states and national entities in case the stated eco-tourism enterprise covers sites across States and/ or national entities are involved.

Strategy vi: Education and outreach: For effective use of the eco-tourism potential of the area, effective communication plan covering all eco-tourism sites of a State will be drawn by the State Governments with the help of expert organsiations. The Plan, among other relevant information, will include information to the tourists on the eco-system services and intangible benefits provided by the area. The communication plan will include measures to promote partnerships between the eco-tourism project and socially responsible companies. Use of modern technologies such as electronic visual tools and well equipped modern interpretation centre at the eco-tourism site will be encouraged through this Plan to encourage self-learning by visitors. The Plan will also lay emphasis on appropriate signages for generating awareness among the visitors regarding the safety and risk factors in the eco-tourism zone and safety protocol and information material on the area for the visitors. The Central government will support the outreach of States' eco-tourism potential for international tourists in a programmatic manner.

Strategy vii: Monitoring: Each eco-tourism plan will invariably include a dynamic monitoring mechanism, covering multiple biological parameters to monitor stress on wildlife vis-a-vis number and patterns of tourist visitation and their level of satisfaction, involvement of local people, scope for improvement in flow of eco-system services, etc. The monitoring will also include mechanisms to ensure that rigorous practices are in place to prevent biological invasion, disease transmission, and air, water, noise or light pollution. The States Governments/UT Administrations shall endeavour to maintain service level quality standards through appropriate certification/rating protocols.

The States shall endeavour to initiate a ranking system for the respective ecotourism sites.

There shall be regular monitoring by the State Governments and Union Territories on the implementation of the guidelines spelt out in the Guidelines for Sustainable Ecotourism in forest and wildlife areas-2021.

District, State and National level monitoring committees comprising of representatives of relevant stakeholder departments, the local communities, civil societies, and the corporate organisations will be constituted to oversee the implementation of this Guidelines including mobilisation of the required technical, financial and human resource support for eco-tourism plans.

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Strategy viii: Review: The National level eco-tourism monitoring committee will review the Eco-Tourism Guidelines every three years and make recommendation to the Central Government.

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[1]Wherever 'local community' has been used in this Guidelines, it will mean to include Schedule Tribe and other traditional forest dwellers as per Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, which is referred hereinafter as FRA 2006 in short.

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Annexure I

Potential Sites in India for Ecotourism (Illustrative)

S.No.	State/ UT Administration	Name of Protected Area
	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	
1		Mahatama Gandhi Marine (Wandoor) NP
2		Mount Harriett NP
3		Ross Island WLS
	Andhra Pradesh	
4		Coringa WLS
5		Pulicat Lake WLS
	Arunachal Pradesh	
6		Itanagar WLS
	Assam	
7		Orang NP
8		DeeporBeel WLS
9		Hollongapar Gibbon WLS
10		Pabitora WLS
	Bihar	
11		Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary
	Chandigarh	
12		City Bird WLS
13		Sukhna Lake WLS
	Chhattisgarh	
14		Kanger Valley NP
15		Pamed Wild Buffalo WLS
	Goa	
16		BhagwanMahavir WLS
17		Dr. Salim Ali Bird (Chorao) WLS
	Gujarat	
18		Gir National Park & WLS &Gir Landscape
19		Marine (Gulf of Kachchh) NP
20		Barda WLS
21		Girnar WLS

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22		
23		Jessore Sloth Bear WLS
24		Kachchh Desert WLS
25		NalSarovar Bird WLS
26		Thol Lake WLS
		Wild Ass WLS
	Haryana	
27		
28		Sultanpur NP
29		Morni Hills (Khol-Hi-Raitan) WLS
		Nahar WLS
	Himachal Pradesh	
20		
31		Great Himalayan NP
32		Dhauladhar WLS
33		Kulatop-Khajjiar WLS
34		Kibber WLS
35		Manali WLS
36		Pong Dam Lake WLS
		Renuka WLS
	Jammu & Kashmir	
37		Dachigam NP
38		Gulmarg WLS
	Laddakh	
39		Hemis NP
40		Changthang WLS
	Jharkhand	
41		Dalma WLS
	Karnataka	
42		Bannerghatta NP
43		Kudremukh NP
44		Cauvery WLS
45		Daroji Bear WLS
46		Pushpagiri WLS
	Kerala	
47		Eravikulam NP
48		Silent Valley NP
49		Thattekad Bird WLS
	Lakshadweep	
50		Pitti Island Bird Sanvtuary
	Madhya Pradesh	
51		Madhav NP
52		National Chambal WLS

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		Pachmarhi WLS
	Maharashtra	
54		
55		Sanjay Gandhi (Borivilli) NP
56		Lonar WLS
		Thane Creek Flamingo WLS
	Manipur	
57		
		Keibul-Lamjao NP
	Meghalaya	
58		Balphakram NP
59		Nokrek Ridge NP
	Mizoram	
60		Phawngpui Blue Mountain National Park
	Nagaland	
61		Intanki NP
	Punjab	
62		Harike Lake WLS
63		Beas Conservation Reserve
	Odisha	
64		Bhitarkanika WLS & NP
65		Chilika (Nalaban) WLS
66		Gahirmatha (Marine) WLS
67		Nandankanan WLS
	Rajasthan	
68		Keoladeo Ghana NP
69		Desert National Park Sanctuary
70		Mount Abu WLS
71		National Chambal WLS
	Sikkim	
72		Khangchendzonga NP
73		Maenam WLS
	Tamil Nadu	
74		Gulf of Mannar Marine NP
75		Vedanthangal WLS
76		Point Calimere WLS
	Telangana	
77		KasuBrahmananda Reddy NP

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	Tripura	
78		
79		Clouded Leopard NP
		Trishna WLS
	Uttar Pradesh	
80		
81		Katerniaghat WLS
82		National Chambal WLS
		KachuaWLS
	Uttarakhand	
83		
84		Gangotri NP
85		Nanda Devi NP
86		Valley of Flowers NP
		Kedarnath WLS
	West Bengal	
87		
88		Gorumara NP
89		Jaldapara NP
90		Neora Valley NP
		Singalila NP

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ANNEXURE 7

Project Proposal for Development of Eco-Tourism Camp at Aranyak Camp-Mollem

Justification

1. One of the focus area of Goa Forest Department (GFD), Government of Goa is to promote, develop and encourage Hinterland tourism in State to popularize Goa as one of the preferred destination for Eco-tourism.
2. Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd (GFDCL) , a Government of Goa undertaking, main objectives of which inter-alia includes raising and development of forest & horticulture plantations primarily cashew for purpose of increasing production and development of industries based on their product crops and to establish and promote Eco-Tourism and Eco-development and other environment related activities.
3. A Memorandum of Understanding is being signed between Goa Forest Department & GFDCL Regarding Creation, Operation & Maintenance of Eco-Tourism Assets Activities in Forest and Protected Areas in Goa.
4. The GFDCL has selected Aranyak Camp at Collem village in Dharbandora Taluka for development of an Eco-tourism camp as per guidelines of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF &CC), GoI of October 2021. Presently , there are eco-tourism facilities includes swiss tents, bamboo cottages, canteen facility, amphitheatre, camping sites etc are created for visitors and needs its improvement to facilitate and cater needs of nature enthusiast at this site.
5. The proposed site will be promoted as Nature Education Camp through trained nature guides. Ecotourism activities includes trekking, forest walk etc will be conducted for visitors, school & college students, nature lovers etc. It will help to educate and aware all especially children's towards protection and conservation of forest and wildlife.
6. The site is located in Southern side of Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park, Mollem and famous for world famous Doodhsagar waterfall . Tourist and

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nature enthusiast frequently visit this famous site to enjoy picturesque view of waterfall, pristine forest of Sahyadri hills . The area is plain land covered with Mango orchard protected with fence all round.

7. As per guidelines of MoEF & CC, GOI , the existing and proposed additional Eco-tourism facilities will be refurbished /constructed by using eco-friendly material and it will be a non –permanent type of structure. Since this site is already having facilities, so the question of causing damage to ground flora and fauna , tree felling does not arises within proposed area . Entire eco-tourism complex will be a green building with provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc.
8. Human foot prints are already there on site and large number of tourist visit this site to enjoy and experience the natural beauty. Development of eco-tourism facility will regulate the present of crowd in a sustainable and eco-friendly way.
9. Local community will be involved in operation of maintenance of the facilities which in turn will provide "Green Job" opportunities to them at their door step. Moreover, development of such facilities in the hinterland of Goa will provide a significant awareness among one and all through nature education, wilderness experience, guided interpretive excursion etc. which will further supplement the effort to sensitize the public towards protection and conservation of our rich nature and natural wealth.
10. Through development of Ecotourism at proposed site the heritage and unique cultural traditions associated with the biodiversity in this area including Kadamba-Yadava architectural Mahadeva Temple, Tambdi surla, Devils canyon, Sacred groves etc will be showcased. This will further enhance the efforts of Government to promote and preserve the traditional indigenous knowledge, folk history & architecture for posterity.
11. GFDCL undertake to comply with all rules & regulations applicable as per the Acts / Rules and will take up mitigation measures as suggested by Chief Wildlife Warden, Goa.

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ANNEXURE 8

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SITE INSPECTION REPORT

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Project name: Development of Eco-Camps at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa
Place: Village Collem, Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park
Date: -30/09/2023

The instant proposal "Development of eco-camps at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa" submitted by Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) is to promote, develop and encourage hinterland tourism in State to popularize Goa as one of the preferred destination for Eco-tourism. Through development of Ecotourism at Aranyak Campsite the heritage and unique cultural traditions associated with the biodiversity in this area will be showcased. This will further enhance the efforts of Government to promote and preserve the traditional indigenous knowledge, folk history & architecture for posterity. The area proposed for the development of eco camps in Sy.No. 38/1 of Collem Village is 2.096 Ha (20960 Sq.m). Aranyak Campsite is situated in Collem Village which falls inside Collem Beat and Collem Round of Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park.

Background:

Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park and Sanctuary forms part of Protected Area (PA) network of Goa, covering an area of 240 sq. kms. The Sanctuary is connected with Netrawali Wildlife Sanctuary in the South and Madei Wildlife Sanctuary in the North and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary and Anshi National Park (Kali Tiger Reserve) on the East. Hence, it forms very important habitat for all wildlife. Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park was declared in the year 1978 to preserve and protect the rich biodiversity of these areas which form part of the Western Ghats. The major forest type in this area is Moist mixed deciduous(3B/C2). On high elevation areas, there is presence of Semi evergreen forests (2A/C2) and Lateritic semi evergreen forests(2E4). Major tree species in the area include Calamus roxberghii, Xylia xylocarpa, Tectona grandis (planted)

Lannea coromandalica, Lagerstroemia lanceolata, Careya arborea, Artocarpus lakoocha, Hydnocarpus spp, Bombax malabarica, Tenninalia crenulata, Tenninalia panicilata, Terminalia bellirica etc.

Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park is rich in wildlife and has reported evidence of carnivores like Tiger, Leopard, Wild dogs, leopard cat and herbivores such as gaur, sambar, barking deer, spotted deer, wild boar etc. There are also reports and sightings of species such as porcupine, hare, civet cat species, mongoose species and Slender lories to list a few. Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park is also rich in diverse population of snakes (King cobra, Malabar pit wiper, bamboo pit wiper, ornate flying snake, bronze- back snake, forstens cat snake etc) birds (Forest owlet, Malabar grey Hornbill, Great Hornbill, Malabar trogon, fairy blue birds, forest wag tail, blue robbin etc. butterflies (Southern bird wing, Malabar nymph, crimson rose, common rose atc,) moths (Atlas moth, moon moth, tussah moth, owl eyed moth) frogs (tree frogs and toads) and other insects.

Vide letter No.1-V-70-FD-2023/4789 dated 27-01-2023, approval of Government has been conveyed to GFDC regarding the operation and maintenance of the existing Eco-tourism sites at Bondla Cottages (Bondla WLS), Aranyak Camp (Bhagwan Mahavir WLS), Hatipaul Eco- Tourism Complex (Cotigao WLS) to be undertaken by GFDC with the prime focus of community involvement on prescribed modalities, terms and conditions for each site subject to applicable Acts/Rules/Guidelines/Management Plans

Vide letter No. 1/ESR/GFDC/Acheiv/141/2022-2023/325/3300 dated 05-10-2023 it was conveyed that Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) may like to submit proposals and may obtain required approvals under relevant Acts/ Rules including Wildlife clearance under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for eco- tourism activities in new/ existing eco-tourism sites on behalf of Forest Department.

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The Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC), Government of Goa has envisaged developing the existing Aranyak Campsite located in Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park Goa as an Eco- hinterland tourism destination, under the State Government Funding. In pursuance of the above, the GFDC has decided to engage a consultant of national repute with knowledge of local conditions for preparation of a Development plan for the development of Eco-camps at Aranyak Campsite.

The selected Consultant is envisaged to carry out a study to assess existing scenario, conduct gap analysis of the destination, formulate a detailed project report and suggest project budget for development of the selected site. Darashaw & Co. Pvt. Ltd. has been appointed as Consultant for Development of Eco- hinterland tourism at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa. The Detailed Project Proposal 'Development eco-camps at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa' is attached herewith the proposal.

Detailed Project Proposal:

The DPR submitted by GFDC for development of eco-camps at Aranyak Campsite, Collem, South Goa was gone through before the Site Inspection for understanding of the project proposal. The important points for consideration is mentioned below;

1. As desired by the Government, GFDCL has envisaged developing Aranyak Campsite located in the Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park, Goa as an Eco- hinterland tourism world class destination, under the State Government Funding. And bringing in private investment and expertise to fill the possible gaps.
2. Objectives of the assignment is mentioned at page 6 of the DPR. Develop the project looking at the areas for potential development, which contribute to employment generation for local population is the main focus.
3. Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park is a 240 Sq. Km. protected area located in the Western Ghats of West India,

In Dharbandora Taluka, Goa State, along the eastern border with Karnataka. The area is situated near the town of Mollem, 57 kilometres (35 mi) east of Panaji, the state capital of Goa. National Highway 748 divides it into two parts and the Mormugao - Londa railway line passes through the area. It is located between 15°15"30 to 15°29"30' N and 74°10"15' to 74°20"15'E. It contains several important temples dating to the Kadambas of Goa, and home to waterfalls, such as Dudhsagar Falls and Tambdi Falls. Proposed site is about 1.2 kms from the nearest railway station i.e. Kulem (Collem). The land area proposed to be involved in this activity is 2.096 ha.

4. The proposed site has been identified for eco-camps due to already existing camping facilities in the park. The said facility can be extended to meet the state of art facilities. One of the advantages of this site is the location which is on the route towards famous Dudhsagar falls which can attract more nature lovers to experience the wonder of nature and this site is also suitable with respect to receive sunlight which could be further stored and utilized for the benefit of proposed development.
5. In chapter 4 of the DPR, the infrastructure available at the site has been assessed. It is mentioned that the proposed site lacks in Parking space, needs upgradation in Hospitality facilities, improvement of Water facility, better safety and security, organized hop on hop off buses, trekking facility etc.
6. At chapter 4.2, the major issues which need to be addressed at the site is provided. Nature enthusiasts facilities like sanitation facilities, parking, dust bins, information boards are to be introduced. Further the approach road need to be developed along with illumination. Night safety to be improvised. The management and beautification of the Trek is necessary intervention for popularizing the proposed site. Further it is mentioned in the

community Engagement, participatory approach should be followed while important decision making pertaining to Aranyak Campsite. 94/C

7. The overall infrastructure assessment is given at chapter 4.3 of DPR. The infrastructures required for the Project have been assessed under respective indicators. Trek Rejuvenation, Quality infrastructures, Cleanliness and Maintenance, Safety and Security, Food and Accommodation, Local Transportation Pollution, Job opportunities are important.
8. In chapter 5 of DPR, the Proposed Development Plan is discussed. The development plan suggests major interventions in the proposed area and also at other hinterland tourism adventure facilities available with Government of Goa/ GFDC, which are the development of eco camps at site, providing rest rooms, recreational activities, refurbishing of existing kitchen, dining area, solar panels, Existing lights, solar fencing and extension, digging pits, redevelopment of approach road, and Bird trails. The entrance to the proposed site is through a kuchha road from forest check post near Range office, which will be required to be revamped for effective hinterland tourism development. Sustainable practices in terms of solar lighting, ground water recharge pits, use of Grey water for landscaping and soft interventions like integrated waste management, parking system, hop on hop off buses and tracking system.
9. The proposed intervention is categorized into different categories based on the characteristic of intervention. These interventions are: a. Development of eco-camps at the proposed site b. Common area catering to visitors c. Recreational activities within the proposed site d. Refurbishment of existing dining area and extension. e. Refurbishment of existing Kitchen area f. Approach road improvement g. Integrated Management plan h. Installation of

CCTV cameras and command control center i. Installation of solar street lights and solar panels J. Digging pits for water recharge using the natural slope of the site k. Solar fencing/ Chain link fence.

10. The recreational activities like Village Tour, Nature Treks, Bird Watching, Guided Wildlife Safari by vehicle in the Protected Area and the surrounding forest areas have been proposed.

11. In chapter 5.3 of DPR, Preliminary costing of the project has been worked out and it is coming around Rs. 2.50 Crores.

12. In chapter 5.4 of DPR, revenue generation model has been detailed. the revenue generation model for proposed eco camps at Aranyak Campsite will include income from 9 Eco-Camps, 4 Open huts, Mini Conference hall, restaurant and tour guide operator.

13. In chapter 5.5, sustainable practices to be followed are mentioned. Solar lights, water recharge pits, compose pits, waste management practices, Somber lightings, sustainable storm water runoff, solar fencing will be provided.

14. In chapter 6 of DR, socio-economic impacts, hinter land tourism impact has been assessed.

15. In chapter 7 of DPR, implementation mechanism has been described. Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) is the Nodal agency for implementing the proposed project and for release of funds after receiving the sanctioned grants.

16. It is mentioned in the DPR of the User Agency that subject to and in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in Agreement signed/directions received between GFD & GFDCL, GFD has grants and authorizes GFDCL the right to operate and maintain the Project Assets, to exercise and/or enjoy the rights, powers, benefits, privileges, and authorizations and entitlements as set forth in this Agreement including the right to collect, retain and appropriate all tariffs, fees, and charges for the facilities and services provided.

17. GFDCL shall have the right to management and use of Project Assets in accordance with the provisions of the Applicable law and for this purpose it may regulate the entry into and use of the same by third parties. 93/C

18. GFDCL shall be at liberty to carry out necessary alterations or modifications to the Project Assets or undertake new construction in order to meet their obligation of providing the facilities and services at its own costs. GFDCL may engage suitably qualified agencies/contractors/third-parties for the operation of permitted activities at the Project activities. However, GFDCL shall not sub-lease or transfer the operation, maintenance and utilization of the Project Assets to any other party

Site Inspection:

On 30/09/2023 Joint Inspection was carried out by the undersigned at Aranyak Camp Site, Collem identified by the GFDC/ User Agency for development of eco-camps. ACF, Range Forest Officer (Madei wildlife range) and staff were present from the Forest Department. General Manager, GFDC along with Project Consultant Darashaw & Co. Pvt. Ltd and Staff were present from the User Agency. The Detailed Project Proposal has been explained at the site in detail. After going through the DPR and inspection of the site, observations are listed below;

(i) Regarding the Proposed Site:

1) The proposed site for "Development of Eco-camps at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa" falls in Sy. No 38/1 of COLLEM village under Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park, notified under Section 35 of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

2) The present site is one of the important eco-tourism attractions in view of its location enroute to Dudhsagar falls. Campsite is already having

existing camping facilities. The rights and claims under FRA, 2006 is not finalized yet.

3) Department has, in the past, developed a camping facility and permits the visitors to stay in the tented accommodations. People from Goa and outside states visits this place during the monsoon and after the monsoon to visit the nearby Dudhsagar waterfall and stay in jungle. Department has existing facilities for forest Protection also.

4) It is an existing eco-tourism site. As such it is proposed under eco-tourism Zone of draft Management Plan of Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park and Sanctuary. The management Plan is in final stage of approval.

5) The forests adjacent to the Aranyak Camp Site is good forest vegetation and having presence of wildlife movement. Regular movement of Wild animals such as Sloth Bears, Indian Bison are recorded near the Aranyak Campsite and surrounding areas and the area is known for the endemic species of Malabar pit viper, Malabar gliding frogs, hump nose pit viper etc.

6) Information regarding basic facilities at the site is given below

1.	Electricity connection	Available. Frequent power cut noticed. Solar power supply shall be upgraded with proper backup.
2.	Water supply	There is no public water supply at site, However the camp relies on existing well at the camp site.
3.	Fencing	Area needs to be properly fenced. Existing fence is in damaged condition.
4.	Network connectivity	Wireless connection available at campsite, weak signals of Jio and Vodafone Network available.

(ii) Trekking Route to Dudhsagar Waterfall:

7) Dudhsagar Waterfall is located in the National Park near to the Goa-karnataka Border. The distance from the campsite is 12 km. Department operates the waterfall trekking route only after the monsoon and after analyzing the risk factors. Visitors with valid entry tickets are allowed with trained Nature Guides. Some from the local villages have been trained as Nature Guides in recent years.
8) There are limited public amenities near the base of waterfall at present.
9) As the Trek route is existing eco-tourism activity and it is proposed under Eco-Tourism Zone of draft Management Plan of Madei Wildlife Sanctuary.
10) The trek route can be upgraded with eco-friendly facilities with adequate information boards, although it is not part of proposed plan but it will augment the camp stay of visitors by witnessing the jungle with help of trained nature guides.
11) As mentioned above, regular wildlife movement is noticed in these areas, suitable mechanism to be worked considering the safety of visitors and wildlife.
12) Rejuvenation of trekking route to waterfall is not part of proposed Project area of 2.096 ha. The rejuvenation/ revising of trek route shall be taken up by GFDC/ UA in consultation with GFD.

Recommendations:

Considering the justifications given by GFDC/ UA, the instant proposal "Development of eco-camps at Collem, North Goa" at the existing Aranyak campsite submitted by Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) is recommended subject to following conditions/suggestions;

1. The proposed eco-tourism site at Aranyak Campsite is in Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park is part of the Eco-tourism zone in the proposed Management Plan. The draft Management Plan is already submitted and it is in final stage of approval. All the eco-tourism related activities to be undertaken strictly under the provisions of WLPA,1972 and as per the prescriptions of approved Management Plan.
2. The flora and fauna of the Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park and their movement shall not be disturbed.
3. As mentioned in the justifications of the Proposal, the Eco-tourism facility are to be developed by using eco-friendly materials and shall be of non -permanent type of structures as mentioned in the act and policy.
4. Entire eco-tourism complex will be a green building with provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. Local Panchayat will also be involved in managing both solid and wet waste. No waste and waste water will be disposed in the WLS. Single Use Plastics and Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same shall be strictly complied.
5. As movement of wild animals like Gaur, Sloth Bear, Tiger etc are recorded at site and in nearby areas, adequate measures to be taken while developing the project site, assets and project activities considering the safety of wild animals and Visitors. As mentioned in the Project Proposal, Solar fencing shall be erected around the Project site as per established norms without obstructing free movement of wild animals.
6. As snakes and other reptiles are also recorded in the surrounding areas, eco-camps and common facilities are to be designed accordingly. Free movement of visitors shall not be allowed. Venturing out into surrounding forest areas except authorized routes must be not allowed. The proposed activities like Bird Walk, Treks are to be done strictly under the supervision of the authorized Nature Guides. Further

GFDC/UA shall only undertake such Treks, Bird Walks, Safaris etc. in routes identified by the Department in a prescribed manner.

7. Both indoor and outdoor lightings may be kept minimum inside the Eco-camp. Bright lights/ Flood lights to be avoided. Sombre lights with movement sensors may be encouraged in the common area. Loud Music and Noise in any form shall not be allowed. Genset is proposed in the Project Proposal. Silent or Sound Proof Generator is recommended to reduce the disturbance.

8. Trained wildlife rescuers and watchers need to be kept at the proposed eco-tourism site for rescue and rehabilitation purposes. UA/GFDC shall undertake the rescue in association with concerned RFO.

9. Further community upliftment through conservation efforts is the prime focus of this Project. Therefore, local villagers may be engaged and involved in operationalization and management of the Eco-tourism site/ activity through suitable mechanism as far as possible.

10. Regarding chapter (7) Implementation Mechanism, due care shall be given while operation and management of eco-tourism project in the interest and mandate of the Government on prescribed modalities, terms and conditions subject to applicable Acts/Rules/Guidelines/Management Plans. In case of alterations or modifications of the Project assets or undertaking of any new construction in the proposed site, prior, clearance/ approval shall be taken from Competent Authority.

11. Since surrounding vegetation has grass patches and is prone to fire in summer season, all necessary precautionary measures are to be undertaken. Required firefighting equipments are to be installed in adequate sites. Kindling of Fire in any form like Bonfire etc. shall strictly be not allowed inside the camp. Smoking shall be strictly prohibited in the site.

12. The activities proposed outside the Project Site like improvement of approach road, revising the trekking route etc. will be undertaken in association and advice of the Department as the manner prescribed.

13. The carrying capacity of the proposed site and different proposed activities are to be ascertained in association with the department.

14. GFDC/UA shall deploy adequate trained manpower in operation and overall management of the site and activities.

Asabosti

(Jabestin A)
Dy. Conservator of Forests
Wildlife & Eco-tourism North

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GOVERNMENT OF GOA
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
& CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN
FOREST DEPARTMENT
"GOA VAN BHAWAN"
ALTINHO, PANAJI, GOA 403001

Email: apccf-forest.goa@nic.in

Tel: 0832-2492522

No. CWLW-62-SBWL/FD(Part)/2022-23/ 4260

Date: 12/12/2023
Agrahayana 21 Saka 1945

To

1	Shri Ganesh Gaonkar, Hon. MLA Sanvordem.	15	Dr. Babaji Ingole, Visiting Scientist, National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research, Vasco.
2	Dr. Deviya Rane, Hon. MLA Poriem.	16	Dr. Pradeep Sarmokadam, Member Secretary, Goa State Biodiversity Board, Goa
3	Shri Antonio Vaz, Hon. MLA, Cortalim.	17	Shri Anil Shetgaonkar, Retd. State Forest Service Officer, Mapusa.
4	Dr. Puneet Kr Goel, IAS, Chief Secretary & Secretary (Forest).	18	Shri Rohidas Kansekar, Navelim, Bicholim.
5	Shri R. K. Gupta, IFS, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests.	19	Shri Uday Rane, Sarpanch, Bhironda Village Panchayat, Sattari.
6	Director General of Police, Panaji, Goa.	20	Managing Director, Goa Tourism Development Corporation, Panaji.
7	Dr. Agostinho Misquita, Director, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Sciences, Panaji, Goa	21	Shri Millind Karkhanis, Caranzalem, Tiswadi, Goa.
8	Goa Bird Conservation Network, Vasudha Colony, Lane-1, Alto-St.cruz, Bambolim, Goa-403202	22	Secretary, Tribal Welfare, Government of Goa, Porvorim.
9	Aranya Environment Research Organisation . Morlem, Sanquelim, Goa 403505	23	Director, Directorate of Fisheries, Panaji, Goa
10	World Wide Fund for Nature India, behind Goa Science Centre, Miramar, Panaji, Goa 403001.	24	Director, Wildlife Preservation, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003
11	Dr. M. K. Janarthanam, Chairperson, Goa State Research Foundation, Porvorim.	25	Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Chandrabani, Dehradun.
12	Shri Amrut Singh, President, Animal Rescue Squad, Bicholim	26	Director, Botanical Survey of India, Central Library, C.N.H. Building, 3rd Floor, P.O.Botanic Garden, Howrah-711103
13	Shri Charan Dessai, Member, Animal Rescue Squad, Ponda.	27	Director, Zoological Survey of India, Prani Vigyan Bhawan, M-Block, New Alipore, Kolkata - 700053
14	Shri Sujeet Kumar Dongre, Program Co-ordinator, Centre for Environment Education, Porvorim.		

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GOVERNMENT OF GOA
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& CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN
FOREST DEPARTMENT
"GOA VAN BHAWAN"
ALTINHO, PANAJI, GOA 403001

Email: apccf-forest.goa@nic.in

Tel: 0832-2492522

Sub: Minutes of Meeting of the Goa State Board for Wildlife– reg.

Please find enclosed herewith the approved Minutes of the Meeting of the Goa State Board for Wildlife held on 20th November, 2023 in the Conference Hall, Mantralaya, Porvorim under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Chief Minister/ Chairman, SBWL.

(Umakant, IFS)
Chief Wildlife Warden

Encl: As above.

Copy to:

OSD to Hon. Chief Minister, Chairperson, GSBWL for kind information pl.
OSD to Hon. Forest Minister, Vice Chairperson, GSBWL for kind information pl.

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Minutes of the meeting of State Board for Wildlife, Goa [SBWL] held on 20th November, 2023 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Chief Minister at Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Mantralaya, Secretariat, Porvorim, Goa

1. List of participants is at Annexure.

2. At the outset while welcoming all present, Chairman asked Chief Wildlife Warden [CWLW], Member Secretary of SBWL [MS] to initiate proceedings. MS briefly explained agenda points and related details, which were shared earlier with members along with meeting notice. Subsequently, following agenda points were discussed and decision taken by the Board.

3. **Agenda No. 1: Confirmation of minutes of SBWL Meeting held on 12th July 2023.**
While placing minutes of 12th July, 2023 meeting for ratification, Board was informed about observations of Ld. Advocate General on minutes of the meeting. Accordingly, Board agreed to amend minutes with reference to two agenda points as tabulated under:

Agenda Point	Original	Amendment
1. WRD proposal for construction of dam at Charavane village in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary	**As per (vi) of Agenda 1 of SBWL Meeting dated 12.07.2023** After detailed deliberations and careful consideration of points highlighted by CE, the Board agreed to the proposal in-principle keeping larger public interests in view and asked WRD to complete prescribed procedural formalities for obtaining Forest and Wildlife Clearance	**As per (vi) of Agenda 1 of SBWL Meeting dated 12.07.2023** After detailed deliberations and careful consideration of points highlighted by CE, the Board agreed to the proposal in-principle keeping larger public interests in view and asked WRD to complete prescribed procedural formalities for obtaining Forest and Wildlife Clearance as per applicable Law/ Acts.
2. Apprise SBWL on Tiger Reserve matter	**As per (iii) of Agenda 2 of SBWL Meeting dated 12.07.2023** The Board noted that legal provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, with respect to protection,	**As per (iii) of Agenda 2 of SBWL Meeting dated 12.07.2023** The Board noted that legal provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, with respect to protection,

Addl. Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests
Chief Wildlife Warden
Panaji Goa

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	for PAs including Wildlife Sanctuary, National Park, and that for Tiger Reserve etc. are almost similar. Considering the existing facts and circumstances, the Board unanimously resolved that declaration of already notified PAs in Goa as Tiger Reserve which as per NTCA guidelines should be an inviolate area, will not serve any significant purpose, and neither will it be feasible in view of availability of relatively small PAs and large population living in and around these PAs.	for PAs including Wildlife Sanctuary, National Park, and that for Tiger Reserve etc. are almost similar. Considering the existing facts and circumstances, the Board unanimously resolved that declaration of already notified PAs in Goa as Tiger Reserve which as per NTCA guidelines should be an inviolate area, will not serve any significant purpose, at this stage, and neither will it be feasible in view of availability of relatively small PAs and large population living in and around these PAs.

Board was also briefed about actions being taken in compliance to directions of board during meeting on 12th July, 2023. Board ratified the minutes of meeting with amendments as proposed above.

4. Agenda No. 2: Aprise SBWL status of tiger reserve matter:
Board was informed that, subsequent to order of Hon'ble High Court dated 24th July,2023, directing State Government to notify Madei Wildlife Sanctuary and other areas as Tiger Reserve within three months from the date of order. With the approval of Government, an SLP has been filed in Hon'ble Supreme Court challenging above-mentioned direction of Hon'ble High Court. During hearing on 25th September, 2023, Hon'ble Supreme Court issued notice to all Respondents (Goa Foundation, NTCA and MoEF&CC, Govt. of India). Meanwhile, since three-month period was getting over on 23rd Oct,2023 and matter is sub-judice in Hon'ble Supreme Court, with approval of Government, CWLW filed a MCA in Hon'ble High Court with prayer to extend time period for compliance of directions of Hon'ble High Court. Further, Goa Foundation also filed an MCA in Hon'ble High Court with prayer to issue contempt notice to State. The Hon'ble High Court during hearing held on 6th November,2023 ordered that *"At the joint request of Ms Norma Alvares and the Ld. Advocate General, we post these applications on 11th December 2023"*. Board directed forest department to closely follow the case in consultation with Government Advocate to safeguard the interest of the State.

5. Agenda No. 3: BSNL mobile tower projects in PA's: BSNL under "GOI USOF BSNL 4G Saturation Project" submitted 8 proposals for Installation of 4G mobile

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Chief Wildlife Warden,
Panaji - Goa

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towers in Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary (two) and in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary (six). The location details of 8 towers is tabulated under:

SN	Village	Protected Area
1	Potrem	Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary
2	Naiquinim	Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary
3	Xelopo-Buzruco	Madei Wildlife Sanctuary
4	Sigonem	Madei Wildlife Sanctuary
5	Kumthal	Madei Wildlife Sanctuary
6	Bandirwada	Madei Wildlife Sanctuary
7	Dabem	Madei Wildlife Sanctuary
8	Caranzol	Madei Wildlife Sanctuary

a. The area required in case of each tower is 0.02 ha. The DCF and CWLW have examined and recommended the proposals in larger public interest with certain mitigation conditions. The Board deliberated on each proposal and recommended for consideration/ approval of National Board for Wildlife.

b. HEM while highlighting that BSNL 4G Saturation Project is of national importance and is to be attended in a time bound manner, suggested that for any additional similar proposal of BSNL to be submitted in future under above mentioned project, SBWL may like to grant in principle approval at this stage and Forest Department may examine proposal/s on merit and with approval of Government, it may be sent to NBWL for consideration/ approval. Such proposal/s sent to NBWL may be put up for ratification of SBWL in subsequent meeting. The Board agreed the suggestion and directed Forest Department to take action accordingly.

6. **Agenda No. 4: Proposals of GFDC for ecotourism in protected areas of the State:** Goa Forest Development Corporation [GFDC] has recently been designated, by Government, as 'Nodal Agency' to create, maintain and operate Eco-Tourism sites and activities in Government Forest and Protected Areas on behalf of forest department. To promote Eco- Tourism in hinterland of Goa with people's participation GFDC submitted following five proposals to forest department:

i. **Development of eco-camps at Surla in Madei WL Sanctuary:**

a. To promote Eco- Tourism in hinterland of Goa with people's participation Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited [GFDC] which has recently been designated as "Nodal Agency" to take up Eco-Tourism works in Government Forest and Protected Areas by Government, submitted proposal to develop an Eco-camp facility at Surla plateau. Camp site is on the national highway ... It's a laterite area with only sparse ground vegetation. As per proposal it will be constructed by using eco-friendly material by following applicable guidelines. Eco-friendly measures like solar power, 100 % waste recycling, raised structures to check any damage to ground biodiversity, rain

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Chief Wildlife Warden.
Panaji, Goa

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water harvesting, etc. will be ensured. Solar fencing will be made to ensure safety of visitors and to check any man-animal conflict. Entire camp will be energy efficient green building. Local community will be involved in operation and maintenance of camp. Youths will be trained to work as nature guide /naturalist etc. Project will provide green jobs to youth at their door step in line with the objective of Atma Nirbhar Bharat and Swayampurna programme of Goa Government.

b. DCF (WL-ET) North has carried out inspection and have recommended the proposal subject to certain mitigation conditions. CWLW have also recommended the proposal.

c. The SBWL deliberated in detail and directed that construction should not be permanent and eco-friendly material should be used as per applicable guideline and conditions stipulated by CWLW. Further, local community should be involved. Board approved the proposal and recommended for consideration of NBWL. Board.

ii. **Eco-Tourism in Bhagawan Mahaveer National Park, Collem:**

a. GFDC submitted a proposal to operate and maintain the existing Eco-Tourism site at Aranyak Eco-Camp in Bhagawan Mahaveer National Park, Collem. The proposal includes refurbishing of the existing eco-tourism site and construction of five additional eco-huts, solar fencing of entire premises etc. Activities like bird walk, butterfly walk, treks etc. will be carried out by engaging local youths trained as nature guides and other experts / naturalists etc.

b. DCF (WL-ET) North has carried out inspection and have recommended the proposal subject to certain mitigation conditions. CWLW have also recommended the proposal.

c. The SBWL deliberated in detail and directed that construction should not be permanent and eco-friendly material should be used as per applicable guideline and conditions stipulated by CWLW. Further, local community should be involved. Board approved the proposal and recommended for consideration of NBWL. Board.

iii. **Eco-Tourism activities at Bondla WL Sanctuary:** GFDC submitted a proposal to operate and maintain existing Eco-Tourism site in Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary to promote hinterland tourism in Goa by involving local community.

iv. Board deliberated on GFDC proposal and approved following subject to applicable law / Act/ guidelines issued by Government from time to time and conditions stipulated by CWLW.

a. Identified assets of Forest Department in Eco-Tourism areas of Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary should be handed over to GFDC to conduct eco-tourism activity may be from the revenue generated by GFDC.

b. GFDC may organize wildlife tours in collaboration with experts/ naturalists etc. having specialization in nature and wildlife tourism.

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Chief Wildlife Warden,
Panaji-Goa

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c. Considering various aspects including hygiene, hospitality etc. to the visitors etc. decided to increase eco-cottage room tariff from Rs 1500/ - per room to Rs 3000/- pe room and dormitory charges from Rs 200/- to Rs 400/-.

d. 60% of room tariff collected by GFDC may be retained by them for O&M of Eco-Tourism facilities and remaining 40% may be remitted to Government exchequer.

e. Entry fee [Rs 100/-] from visitors to cottages / dormitories may be collected by GFDC on behalf of Forest Department which may later be remitted to Government.

f. Local community should be involved.

v. **Wildlife tour at Saaveri and Mainapi Waterfalls and other facilities at Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary:** GFDC proposed to Operate & Maintain of eco-tourism Sites & activities, including wildlife tours through specially designed jeep safaris, in Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary to promote hinterland tourism in Goa by involving local community. Board deliberated on GFDC proposal and approved following subject to applicable law / Act/ guidelines issued by Government from time to time and conditions stipulated by CWLW:

a. Assets of Forest Department in Eco-Tourism areas, including at Saaveri & Mainapi waterfalls may be used by GFDC to conduct eco-tourism activities.

b. GFDC may be permitted to conduct wildlife tours for which nature guides trained by the department may be engaged along with other experts/ naturalists

c. Visitors may be allowed to visit Mainapi and Saaveri waterfalls in specially designed jeep safaris to be operated by GFDC.

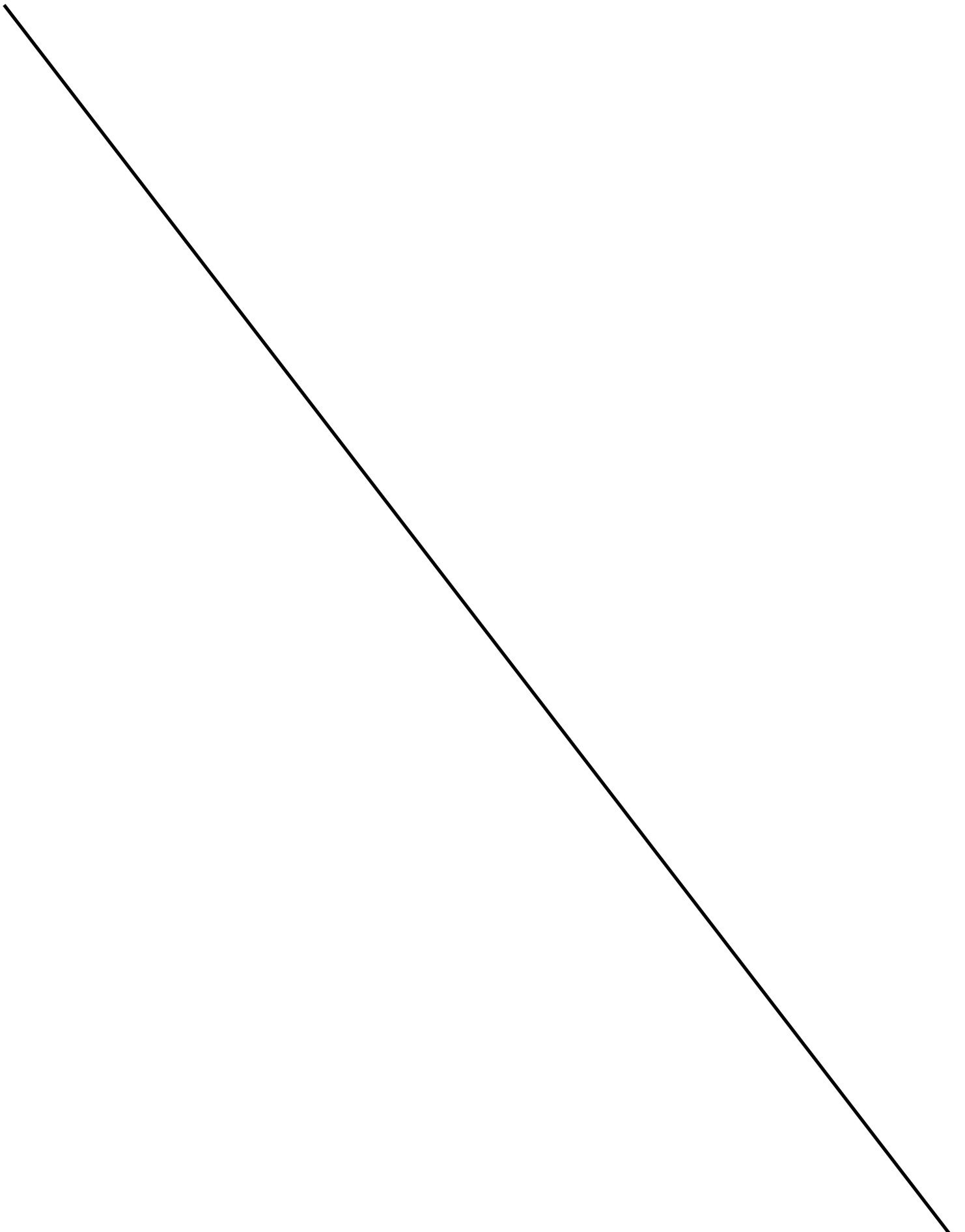
d. Rs 400/ Visitors may be charged for jeep safari to Mainapi and Saaveri water falls from Netravali entry gate. To begin with GFDC may start with two safari jeeps which may further be increased up-to 10 after careful assessment of all aspects comprehensively. Any further increase in no. of safari jeep will essentially require Carrying Capacity Study. Local community may be involved.

vi. **Development of eco-friendly convenience services for visitors at Dudhsagar Waterfalls:** GFDC proposed to operate and maintain public amenities at Dudhsagar waterfalls on charge basis by engaging local community. Facilities will include public convenience, changing room, canteen etc as these facilities are not available for tourists visiting the waterfalls. Board deliberated on GFDC proposal and approved following subject to applicable law / Act/ guidelines issued by Government from time to time and conditions stipulated by CWLW:

a. GFDC may carry out Operation and Maintenance of public amenities at Dudhsagar waterfall eco-tourism site, by engaging local community, on charge basis. Rs 50/- per person may be charged.

b. An eco-friendly canteen facility may be set up by Forest Department which may be run by GFDC. Items and rates may be finalized with the approval of the CWLW, Goa.

Addl. Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests &
Chief Wildlife Warden
Panaji, Goa



FOREST DEPARTMENT

NOTE

Sub: Proposal submitted for Wildlife Clearance under Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for Development of Eco-Camps, in favour of Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC)-reg.

The General Manager, Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC), IIIrd Floor, Junta House, Panaji, Goa had submitted online proposal located within Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park and Madei Wildlife Sanctuary in Wildlife North Goa Division for "Development of Eco-Camps at Aranyak Camsite, village Collem & at Surla in North & South Goa.

The proposal submitted by GFDC, is as under:

In Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park

1. Proposal No. WL/GA/Others/443396/2023

Development of Eco-Camps at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa of Village Collem, submitted by the Goa Forest Development Corporation located within Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park and has been approved by the State Board of Wildlife in its meeting dated 20.11.2023.

In Madei Wildlife Sanctuary

2. Proposal No. WL/GA/Others/443399/2023

Development of Eco-Camps at Surla, North Goa of Village Surla, submitted by the Goa Forest Development Corporation located within Madei Wildlife Sanctuary and has been approved by the State Board of Wildlife in its meeting dated 20.11.2023.

As per the Forest (Conservation) Rules 2022, the proposal was submitted (online) by the General Manager, Goa Forest Development Corporation, IIIrd Floor, Junta House, Panaji, in the PARIVESH portal to the Wildlife Warden, North Goa Division, Panaji, who has inpected the area and recommended **2.096 ha. (Village Collem) & 0.666 ha. (Village Surla).** Recommendation is available in Part III of the proposal **(at page 5/C-6/C).** The proposal has also been recommended by the Chief Wildlife Warden in Part-IV of the proposal **(at page 7/C-8/C).**

The proposals submitted by the User Agency i.e. BSNL, has been deliberated/discussed during the meeting of the State Board of Wildlife (SBWL) held on **20.11.2023 (MoM of the meeting is place at page 15/C-23/C).** All the propsals were recommended by the SBWL Committee for placing before the National Board of Wildlife for approval.

Therefore, the proposal is submitted for filling up of Part-V online PARIVESH 2.0 and seeking approval of the State Govt. before forwarding the proposal to the National Board of Wildlife, New Delhi for their consideration.

Submitted please.

30/04/2025

Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

15/12/2023
ACF (CWLW).

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Office of the Principle Secretary (Forest)
Governmet of Goa.
Secretariat, Porvorim Goa-403521

In Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park

1. Proposal No. WL/GA/Others/443396/2023

Development of Eco-Camps at Aranyak Campsite, South Goa of Village Collem, submitted by the Goa Forest Development Corporation located within Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park and has been approved by the State Board of Wildlife in its meeting dated 20.11.2023.

In Madei Wildlife Sanctuary

2. Proposal No. WL/GA/Others/443399/2023

Development of Eco-Camps at Surla, North Goa of Village Surla, submitted by the Goa Forest Development Corporation located within Madei Wildlife Sanctuary and has been approved by the State Board of Wildlife in its meeting dated 20.11.2023.

The State Government recommends the proposal being in public interest.

(Puneet Kumar Goel, IAS)
Pr. Secretary (Forest),
Govt. of Goa, Porvorim.
(Official Seal)

Dtaed: /12/2023

Place: Porvorim.

30/04/2024

Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forest
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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ANNEXURE 11

भारत सरकार
Government of India
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
राष्ट्रीय व्याघ्र संरक्षण प्राधिकरण
National Tiger Conservation Authority

F. No. 7-163/2023-NTCA **New Delhi, the January 24, 2024**

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Assessment of proposal on Development of Eco-Camps at Collem, South Goa (Online Proposal: WL/GA/Others/443396/2023) – reg.

Reference is invited to the subject cited above. Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd. has submitted a proposal for development of Aranyak Camp at Collem village in Dharbandora Taluka as an Eco-camp. The proposal involves construction of non-permanent structure to promote eco-tourism activities such as trekking, forest walk etc. Through development of Ecotourism at proposed site the heritage and unique cultural traditions associated with the biodiversity in this area including Kadamba-Yadava architectural Mahadeva Temple, Tambdi surla, Devils canyon, Sacred groves, Doodhsagar falls etc. will be showcased. The proposal entails diversion of 2.096 ha of forest land in Wildlife South Division. The proposal was recommended by the State Board for Wildlife, Goa during its meeting held on 20-11-2023. Since the proposal involves tiger occupied landscape, comments of the National Tiger Conservation Authority were solicited for consideration of the Standing Committee of NBWL. Accordingly, the proposal was evaluated based on information available on Parivesh portal and all India tiger estimation data and following observations have been made.

Observations and recommendation

1. The proposed site lies within Mollem WLS and Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park.
2. The project site had tiger presence in its vicinity as per 2022 and 2018 cycles of all India tiger estimation.
3. As per 2022 cycle of all India tiger estimation, the project site had presence of endangered large mammals such as barking deer, chital, gaur, sambar, dhole, leopard and sloth bear in its vicinity.
4. Human foot prints are already there on site and large number of tourist visit this site to enjoy and experience the natural beauty. Development of eco-tourism facility will regulate the present of crowd in a sustainable and eco-friendly way. Considering this, the proposal is recommended for approval under Section 38O(1)(g) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in adherence to the mitigation measures suggested herein.

Suggested mitigation measures

1. The eco-tourism activities should be in adherence to MoEFCC Guidelines for Eco-tourism.
2. User Agency should ensure provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. within the eco-camp campus. No waste and waste water shall be disposed in the WLS. Single Use Plastics and Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same shall be strictly complied within the eco-camp.
3. Tiger dispersal routes/corridors and wildlife corridors to be strictly avoided for construction activities.

बी–१ विंग, सातवां तल, पं. दीनदयाल अंत्योदय भवन, सी.जी.ओ. कांप्लेक्स, लोधी रोड, नई दिल्ली ११०००३
B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003

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Panaji-Goa.

30/04/2024
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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2781C

4. The campus should be appropriately solar fenced so as to avoid any untoward incident of human-wildlife conflict.
5. Feeding of wildlife by tourists should be banned in and around the campus.
6. Tourism activities at night within the campus should be prohibited. Both indoor and outdoor lightings may be kept minimum inside the Eco-camp. Bright lights/ Flood lights to be avoided. Loud Music and Noise in any form shall not be allowed.
7. CWLW, Goa should develop appropriate mechanism to monitor the compliance of the conditions stipulated herein at various phases of project implementation.

(Hemant Singh)
Assistant Inspector General of Forests (NTCA)
E-mail: aig3-ntca@nic.in
Tel. No. +91 11 2436 7837-39
Fax: +91 11 2436 7836

To,

The Inspector General of Forests (WL),
(Wildlife) Division, MoEF&CC,
New Delhi.

Copy to:
1. PS to ADG (PT&E) & MS, (NTCA), New Delhi
2. PA to IGF (NTCA), New Delhi.

30/04/2015

Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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Panaji-Goa.

भारत सरकार
Government of India
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन मंत्रालय
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
राष्ट्रीय व्याघ्र संरक्षण प्राधिकरण
National Tiger Conservation Authority

F. No. 7-164/2023-NTCA **New Delhi, the January 24, 2024**

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Sub: Assessment of proposal on Development of Eco-Camps at Surla, North Goa (Online Proposal: WL/GA/Others/443399/2023) – reg.

Reference is invited to the subject cited above. Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd. has submitted a proposal for development of an Eco-Tourism Camp site at Surla plateau in Sattari taluka of Goa. The proposal involves construction of non-permanent structure to promote eco-tourism activities such as walkways, paths, eco-camps etc. The proposal entails diversion of 0.666 ha of forest land in Wildlife North Division. The proposal was recommended by the State Board for Wildlife, Goa during its meeting held on 20-11-2023. Since the proposal involves tiger occupied landscape, comments of the National Tiger Conservation Authority were solicited for consideration of the Standing Committee of NBWL. Accordingly, the proposal was evaluated based on information available on Parivesh portal and all India tiger estimation data and following observations have been made.

Observations and recommendation

1. The camp is located within Mhadei WLS.
2. The proposed project site had tiger presence in its vicinity as per 2022 and 2018 cycles of all India tiger estimation.
3. As per 2022 cycle of all India tiger estimation, the project site had presence of endangered large mammals such as barking deer, chital, gaur, sambar, dhole, leopard and sloth bear in its vicinity.
4. Human foot prints are already there on site and large number of tourist visit this site to enjoy and experience the natural beauty. Development of eco-tourism facility will regulate the present of crowd in a sustainable and eco-friendly way. Considering this, the proposal is recommended for approval under Section 38O(1)(g) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 in adherence to the mitigation measures suggested herein.

Suggested mitigation measures

1. The eco-tourism activities should be in adherence to MoEFCC Guidelines for Eco-tourism.
2. User Agency should ensure provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. within the eco-camp campus. No waste and waste water shall be disposed in the WLS. Single Use Plastics and Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same shall be strictly complied within the eco-camp.
3. Tiger dispersal routes/corridors and wildlife corridors to be strictly avoided from construction activities.
4. The campus should be appropriately solar fenced so as to avoid any untoward incident of human-wildlife conflict.
5. Feeding of wildlife by tourists should be banned in and around the campus.

बी–१ विंग, सातवां तल, पं. दीनदयाल अंत्योदय भवन, सी.जी.ओ. कांप्लेक्स, लोधी रोड, नई दिल्ली. ११०००३
B-1 Wing, 7th Floor, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan, CGO Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110003

Signature 30/01/2024
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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O/o. PCCF, Forest Dept.,
Panaji-Goa.

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the campus should be prohibited.
propriate mechanism to monitor the compliance of the conditions
ases of project implementation.

(Hemant Singh)
Assistant Inspector General of Forests (NTCA)
E-mail: aig3-ntca@nic.in
Tel. No. +91 11 2436 7837-39
Fax: +91 11 2436 7836

To,

The Inspector General of Forests (WL),
(Wildlife) Division, MoEF&CC,
New Delhi.

Copy to:
1. PS to ADG (PT&E) & MS, (NTCA), New Delhi
2. PA to IGF (NTCA), New Delhi.

30/04/2025
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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ANNEXURE 12

77.5.35 Proposal for use of 2.096 ha of forest land from Mollem WLS and Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park for development of Eco-Camps at Collem, Goa.

WL/GA/Others/443396/2023

The Standing Committee was informed that the proposal is for use of 2.096 ha of forest land from Mollem WLS and Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park for development of Eco-Camps at Collem, Goa.

The proposal has been recommended by Chief Wild Life Warden, the State Board for Wild Life and the State Government. The NTCA has also recommended the project proposal.

Decision Taken: After discussions, the Standing Committee decided to recommend the proposal subject to the following conditions:

1. The proposed eco- tourism site at Aranyak Campsite is in *Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park* is part of the Eco-tourism zone in the proposed Management Plan. The draft Management Plan is already submitted and it is in final stage of approval. All the eco- tourism related activities to be undertaken strictly under the provisions of Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and as per the prescriptions of approved Management Plan.
2. The flora and fauna of the Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park and their movement shall not be disturbed.
3. As mentioned in the justifications of the Proposal, the Eco-tourism facility are to be developed by using eco- friendly materials and shall be of non - permanent type of structures as mentioned in the act and policy.
4. Entire eco-tourism complex will be a green building with provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. Local Panchayat will also be involved in managing both solid and wet waste. No waste and waste water will be disposed in the WLS. Single Use Plastics and Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same shall be strictly complied.
5. As movement of wild animals like Gaur, Sloth Bear, Tiger etc are recorded at site and in nearby areas, adequate measures to be taken while developing the project site, assets and project activities considering the safety of wild animals and Visitors. As mentioned in the Project Proposal, Solar fencing shall be erected around the Project site as per

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Panaji-Goa.

30/04/2024
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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established norms without obstructing free movement of wild animals.

6. As snakes and other reptiles are also recorded in the surrounding areas, eco- camps and common facilities are to be designed accordingly. Free movement of visitors shall not be allowed. Venturing out into surrounding forest areas except authorized routes must be not allowed. The proposed activities like Bird Walk, Treks are to be done strictly under the supervision of the authorized Nature Guides. Further GFDC/ UA shall only undertake such Treks, Bird Walks, Safaris etc. in routes identified by the Department in a prescribed manner.
7. Both indoor and outdoor lightings may be kept minimum inside the Eco camp. Bright lights/ Flood lights to be avoided. Sombre lights with movement sensors may be encouraged in the common area. Loud Music and Noise in any form shall not be allowed. Genset is proposed in the Project Proposal. Silent or Sound Proof Generator is recommended to reduce the disturbance.
8. Trained wildlife rescuers and watchers need to be kept at the proposed ecotourism site for rescue and rehabilitation purposes. UA/GFDC shall undertake the rescue in association with concerned RFO.
9. Further community upliftment through conservation efforts is the prime focus of this Project. Therefore, local villagers may be engaged and involved in operationalization and management of the Eco-tourism site activity through suitable mechanism as far as possible.
10. Regarding chapter (7) Implementation Mechanism, due care shall be given while operation and management of eco-tourism project in the interest and mandate of the Government on prescribed modalities, terms and conditions subject to applicable Acts/ Rules/ Guidelines/ Management Plans. In case of alterations or modifications of the Project assets or undertaking of any new construction in the proposed site, prior. Clearance/ approval shall be taken from Competent Authority.
11. Since surrounding vegetation has grass patches and is prone to fire in summer season, all necessary precautionary measures are to be undertaken. Required firefighting equipments are to be installed in adequate sites. Kindling of Fire in any form like Bonfire etc. shall strictly be not allowed inside the camp. Smoking shall be strictly prohibited in the site.
12. The activities proposed outside the Project Site like improvement of approach road, revising the trekking route etc. will be undertaken in association and advice of the Department as the manner prescribed.

30/01/2024

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Public Information Officer O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

13. The carrying capacity of the proposed site and different proposed activities are to be ascertained in association with the department.
14. GFDC/UA shall deploy adequate trained manpower in operation and overall management of the site and activities.
15. The eco- tourism activities should be in adherence to MoEFCC Guidelines for Eco-tourism.
16. Tiger dispersal routes/corridors and wildlife corridors to be strictly avoided for construction activities.
17. Feeding of wildlife by tourists should be banned in and around the campus.
18. CWLW, Goa should develop appropriate mechanism to monitor the compliance of the conditions stipulated herein at various phases of project.
19. An annual compliance certificate on the stipulated conditions shall be submitted by the User Agency to the State Chief Wild Life Warden and an annual compliance certificate shall be submitted by the State Chief Wild Life Warden to Government of India.

77.5.36 Proposal for use of 0.666 ha of forest land from Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary for construction of walkways, paths, eco-camp etc for development of Eco-Camps at Surla, North Goa.

WL/GA/Others/443399/2023

The Standing Committee was informed that the proposal is for use of 0.666 ha of forest land from Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary for construction ofwalkways, paths, eco-camp etc for development of Eco-Camps at Surla, North Goa.

The proposal has been recommended by Chief Wild Life Warden, the State Board for Wild Life and the State Government. The NTCA has also recommended the project proposal.

Decision Taken: *After discussions, the Standing Committee decided to recommend the proposal subject to the following conditions:*

1. The proposed eco-tourism site at Surla Plateau and Surla Waterfall in Madei Wildlife Sanctuary is part of the Eco-tourism zone in the draft Management Plan. The draft Management Plan is already submitted and it is in final stage of approval. All the eco- tourism related activities to be undertaken strictly under the provisions of Wild Life

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O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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(Protection) Act, 1972 and as per the prescriptions of approved Management Plan of Madei WLS.

2. The flora and fauna of the Wildlife Sanctuary and their movement shall not be disturbed.
3. As mentioned in the justifications of the Proposal, the Eco-tourism facility are to be developed by using eco- friendly materials and shall be of non -permanent type of structures. The UA shall ensure no damage to ground flora and fauna and no tree felling is involved. Moreover, the eco-tourism facilities including walkways, paths, eco- camp etc shall be raised structure on stilt. As the proposed site is in plateau/ mountain cliff, the structure may be erected in that way to withhold strong winds/rains in monsoon season.
4. Entire eco-tourism complex will be a green building with provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. Local Panchayat may also be involved in managing both solid and wet waste. No waste and waste water shall be disposed in the WLS. Single Use Plastics and Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same shall be strictly complied.
5. Tigers, Leopards, Sloth Bears, Sambhar, Wild boars, Porcupine, Jackal, Gaurs, are recorded in this region of WLS. As movement of wild animals like Gaur, Sloth Bear, Tiger etc are recorded at Surla Plateau and in nearby areas, adequate measures are to be taken while developing the project site, assets and project activities considering the safety of wild animals and Visitors. As mentioned in the Project Proposal, Solar fencing shall be erected around the Project site as per established norms without obstructing free movement of wild animals.
6. As Malabar Pit Viper are also recorded in the surrounding areas, eco-camps and common facilities are to be designed accordingly. Free movement of visitors shall not be allowed. Venturing out into surrounding forest areas except authorized routes must be not allowed. The proposed activities like Bird Walk, Treks are to be done strictly under the supervision of the authorized Nature Guides. routes identified by the Department in a prescribed manner.
7. Both indoor and outdoor lightings shall be kept minimum inside the Eco camp. Bright lights to be avoided. High mast lights/ flood lights shall not be permitted. Sombre lights with movement sensors may be encouraged in the common area. Loud Music and Noise in any form should not be allowed. Genset is proposed in the Project Proposal. Silent or Sound Proof Generator is recommended to reduce the disturbance.
8. Trained wildlife rescuers and watchers need to be kept at the proposed ecotourism site for rescue and rehabilitation

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30/04/2025
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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purposes. UA/GFDC shall undertake the rescue in association with concerned RFO.

9. Surla Plateau is the existing eco-tourism site. Due to its attraction, both local villagers and outsiders visit this place. There is sense of belongingness among people of Surla to the site. Therefore, provision may be kept for continuing the existing access to the View Point for Local people/ Day Visitors with valid Entry permit.

10. It is mentioned in the proposal that participatory approach shall be followed while important decision making pertaining to Surla. Further community upliftment through conservation efforts is the prime focus of this Project. Therefore, local villagers shall be engaged and involved in operationalization and management of the Eco- tourism site/ activity through suitable Mechanism as far as possible.

11. Regarding chapter (7) Implementation Mechanism, due care shall be given while operation and management of eco-tourism project in the interest and mandate of the Government on prescribed modalities, terms and conditions subject to applicable Acts/ Rules/ Guidelines/ Management Plans. In case of alterations or modifications of the Project assets or undertaking of any new construction in the proposed site, prior, clearance/ approval shall be taken from Competent Authority.

12. Since surrounding vegetation has grass patches and is prone to fire in summer season, all necessary precautionary measures are to be undertaken. Required firefighting equipments are to be installed in adequate sites. Kindling of Fire in any form like Bonfire etc..shall strictly be not allowed inside the camp. Smoking shall be strictly prohibited in the site.

13. It is mentioned in the proposal that this eco-tourism initiative will improve the socio- economic and socio-demographic profile of this area. Adequate measures are to be taken by GFDC to prevent any fresh encroachments/ occupation in the proposed ecotourism site/ circuit. Any such incursion/ violation shall be reported to the concerned RFO for immediate necessary action.

14. The carrying capacity of the proposed site and different proposed activities are to be ascertained in association with the department.

15. GFDC/UA shall deploy adequate trained manpower in operation and overall management of the site and activities.

16. The eco- tourism activities should be in adherence to MoEFCC Guidelines for Eco-tourism.

17. Tiger dispersal routes/corridors and wildlife corridors to be strictly avoided for construction activities.

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Panaji-Goa.

30/04/2025
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

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18. Feeding of wildlife by tourists should be banned in and around the campus.
19. CWLW, Goa should develop appropriate mechanism to monitor the compliance of the conditions stipulated herein at various phases of project.
20. An annual compliance certificate on the stipulated conditions shall be submitted by the User Agency to the State Chief Wild Life Warden and an annual compliance certificate shall be submitted by the State Chief Wild Life Warden to Government of India.

77.5.37 Proposal for use of 8.758 ha forest land & 20.6132 ha of non-forest land from ESZ of Balaram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary for construction of New BG Railway from Tarangahill -Ambaji- Abu-road (from Km.20.400 to 54.240, Km.78.050 to 86.900 and Km.89.100 to 89.900) - Banaskantha District and (Km- 54.240 to 71.660) in Sabarkantha District.

WL/GJ/RAIL/450929/2023

The Standing Committee was informed that the proposal is for use of 8.758 ha forest land & 20.6132 ha of non-forest land from ESZ of Balaram Ambaji Wildlife Sanctuary for construction of New BG Railway from Tarangahill -Ambaji- Abu-road (from Km.20.400 to 54.240, Km.78.050 to 86.900 and Km.89.100 to 89.900) - Banaskantha District and (Km- 54.240 to 71.660) in Sabarkantha District.

The proposal has been recommended by Chief Wild Life Warden, the State Board for Wild Life and the State Government.

Decision Taken: After discussions, the Standing Committee decided to recommend the proposal subject to the following conditions:

1. The User Agency shall not violate any provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
2. The User agency shall not harm or destroy wildlife habitat including fauna and flora of the Sanctuary.
3. The User Agency shall not use the area for the proposed work other than the area permitted.
4. The User Agency shall not establish any temporary or permanent labour camp in the Sanctuary.
5. The User Agency or his contractor shall not create any fire places inside the Eco Sensitive Zone.

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30/04/2025
Public Information Officer
O/o. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests
Forest Department, Panaji-Goa.

ANNEXURE 13

GOVERNMENT OF GOA
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
& CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN
FOREST DEPARTMENT
"GOA VAN BHAWAN"
ALTINHO, PANAJI, GOA 403001

Email: apccf-forest.goa@nic.in

Tel: 0832-2492522

No. CWLW-(1-790 (P) / FD/ 2022-23/ 5302

Date: 13.02.2024
Magha 24 Saka 1945

To
Managing Director
Goa Forest Development Corporation
Panaji

Sub: Proposal for use of 2.096 ha of forest land from Mollem WLS and Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park for development of Eco-Camps at Collem, Goa.

Sir,

I am directed to inform you that the National Board for Wildlife has considered your proposal for the above mentioned project and has recommended the project proposal as per the terms and conditions set at para 77.5.35 of the minutes (**Copy enclosed**).

Further, it is informed that before initiating any activity in light of above recommendation, you are required to consider the applicability of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 and/ or any other laws in vogue and, if applicable, take necessary action in the same as per the prescribed procedure; besides fulfilling the terms and conditions as mentioned in National Board for Wildlife recommendations.

Yours faithfully

Asstt. Conservator of Forests
O/o Chief Wildlife Warden

Encl: **as above**

O/C

ANNEXURE 14

of the P.C.C.F
No. 13321
R No. 11/24
Dt. 20/2/2024

(A GOVT. OF GOA UNDERTAKING)
GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD
1ST LIFT, 3RD FLOOR, JUNTA HOUSE
PANAJI – GOA
Phone No. 0832-2421728, 2421845 Fax: 2421728 e-mail:mdgfdc@gmail.com

No: III/Activities(Part-P-Mollem)/GFDC/2023-24/2655 Dated:20/2/2024

To,
The Chief Wildlife Warden,
Forest Department,
Goa Van Bhavan- Altinho
Panaji-Goa.

Sub:-Proposal for use of 2.096 ha of forest land from Mollem WLS and Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park for development of Eco-Camps at Collem, Goa.
Ref:-No. CWL-W-(1-790 (P)/FD/2022-23/5302 dated 13.02.2024.

Sir,

With reference to subject and letter cited above, it is to inform that GFDC has submitted the project proposal on 'Development of Eco-camps at Aranyak Campsite, Collem' to Forest department vide letter No./III/Activities (Part-P-Mollem)/GFDC/23-24/921 dated 07/08/2023 and requested to convey necessary clearance & permission. It is learnt that the same is approved by the National Board of Wildlife.

In pursuance, vide letter No. CWL-W-(1-790 (P)/FD/2022-23/5302 dated 13.02.2024, reference to the applicability of Forest (Conservation) Act 1980 or any other laws in vogue for the proposed projects is to be fulfilled.

In view of all above, it is to submit as under;

a) In reference to letter F.No. 5-2/2017-Part(1) dated 25/10/2021, the MoEF&CC, GoI has recommended at Para 11.10 of the Handbook of Forest (Conservator) Act, 1980 to be read as "*Development/Construction of facilities which are not of permanent nature, in forest areas for the purpose of Eco-Tourism by Government authorities shall not be considered as non-forestry activity for the purpose of Forest (Conservator) Act, 1980*" (Copy enclosed).

b) Ministry of Law & Justice (Legislative Department) , GoI vide Gazette Notification No. 18 dated 04/11/2023 published the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Act, 2023. The **Rule 5 (a)(vii)** to be read as:

5. In the principal Act, section 2 shall be renumbered as sub-section (1) thereof and—

(a) in sub-section (1) as so renumbered,—
(I) in clause (iii), for the words "not owned, managed or controlled by Government", the words ", subject to such terms and conditions, as the Central Government may, by order, specify" shall be substituted;
(II) in the Explanation, for the long line occurring after clause (b), the following shall be substituted, namely:—
"but does not include any work relating to or ancillary to conservation, development and management of forests and wildlife, such as—
(i) silvicultural operations including regeneration operations;
(ii) establishment of check-posts and infrastructure for the front line forest staff;
(iii) establishment and maintenance of fire lines;
(iv) wireless communications;
(v) construction of fencing, boundary marks or pillars, bridges and culverts, check dams, waterholes, trenches and pipelines;
(vi) establishment of zoo and safaris referred to in the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, owned by the Government or any authority, in forest areas other than protected areas;
(vii) eco-tourism facilities included in the Forest Working Plan or Wildlife Management Plan or Tiger Conservation Plan or Working Scheme of that area; and
(viii) any other like purposes, which the Central Government may, by order, specify.";
(b) after sub-section (1) as so renumbered, the following sub-section shall be inserted, namely:—
"(2) The Central Government may, by order, specify the terms and conditions subject to which any survey, such as, reconnaissance, prospecting, investigation or exploration including seismic survey, shall not be treated as non-forest purpose."

Further to mention that the site proposed is included in Management Plan of Bhagwan Mahaveer WLS & NP, Mollem and the proposal is prepared considering guidelines of October 2021 issued by MoEF & CC, GoI.

In view of all above, it is for your kind consideration and further advice for applicability of FCA for the proposed Eco-Tourism Project as approved by National Board for Wildlife. It is also kindly requested to convey approval of CWLW for executing the work of Eco-Tourism at Aranyak Camp, Collem.

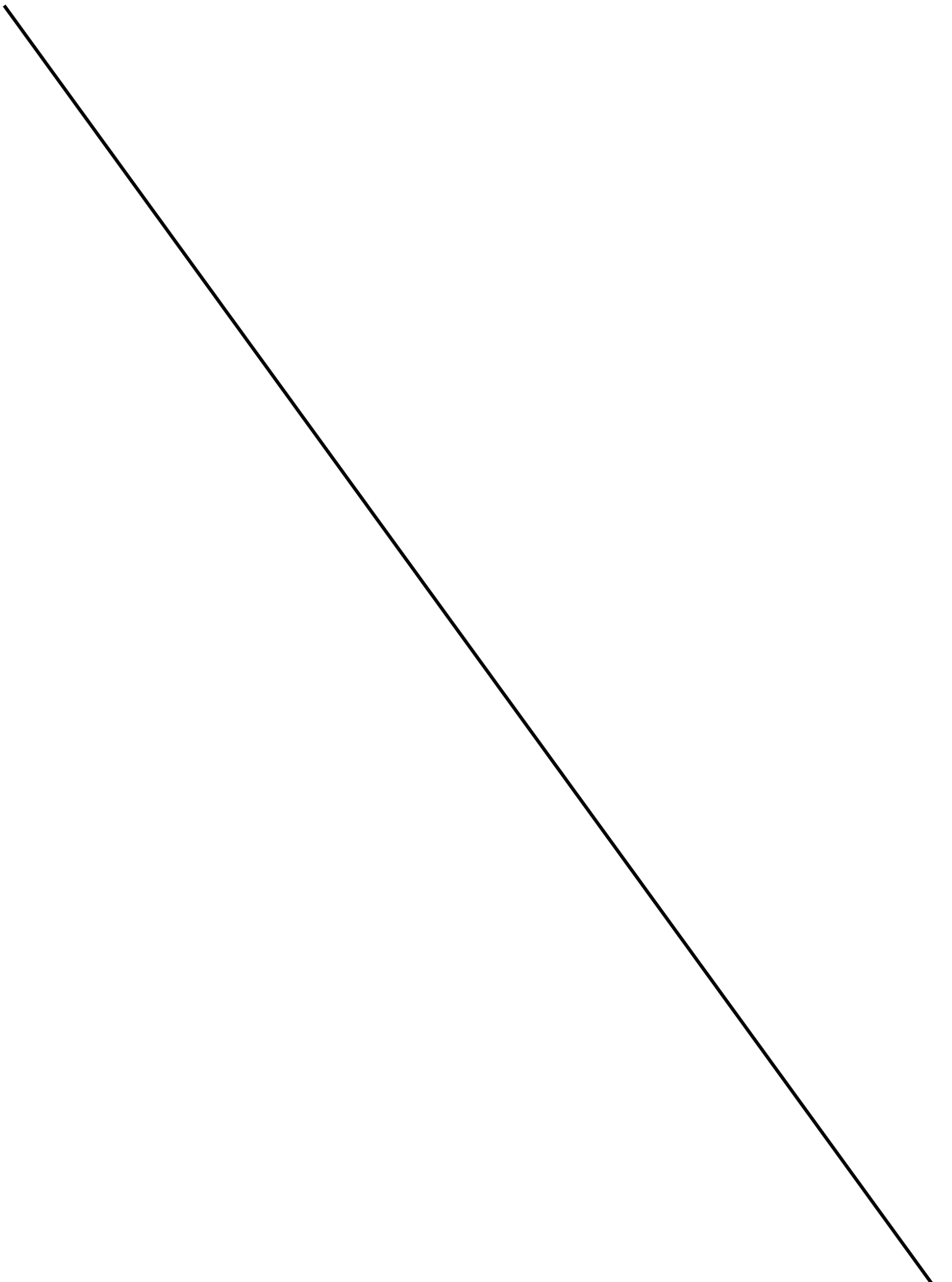
This is for favour of information & necessary action, please.

Yours faithfully,

Encl: as above

20/02/2024

(Nandakumar E. Parab, IFS)
Managing Director



ANNEXURE 15

GOVERNMENT OF GOA
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS
& CHIEF WILDLIFE WARDEN
FOREST DEPARTMENT
"GOA VAN BHAWAN"
ALTINHO, PANAJI, GOA 403001

Email: apccf-forest.goa@nic.in

Tel: 0832-2492522

No. CWLW-(1-790(PC) / FD/ 2022-23/ 5781

Date: 14.03.2024
Phalguna 24 Saka 1945

To
Managing Director
Goa Forest Development Corporation
Panaji

Sub: Proposal for use of 2.096 ha of forest land from BM Wildlife Sanctuary for development of eco-camps at Collem, Goa.

Sir,

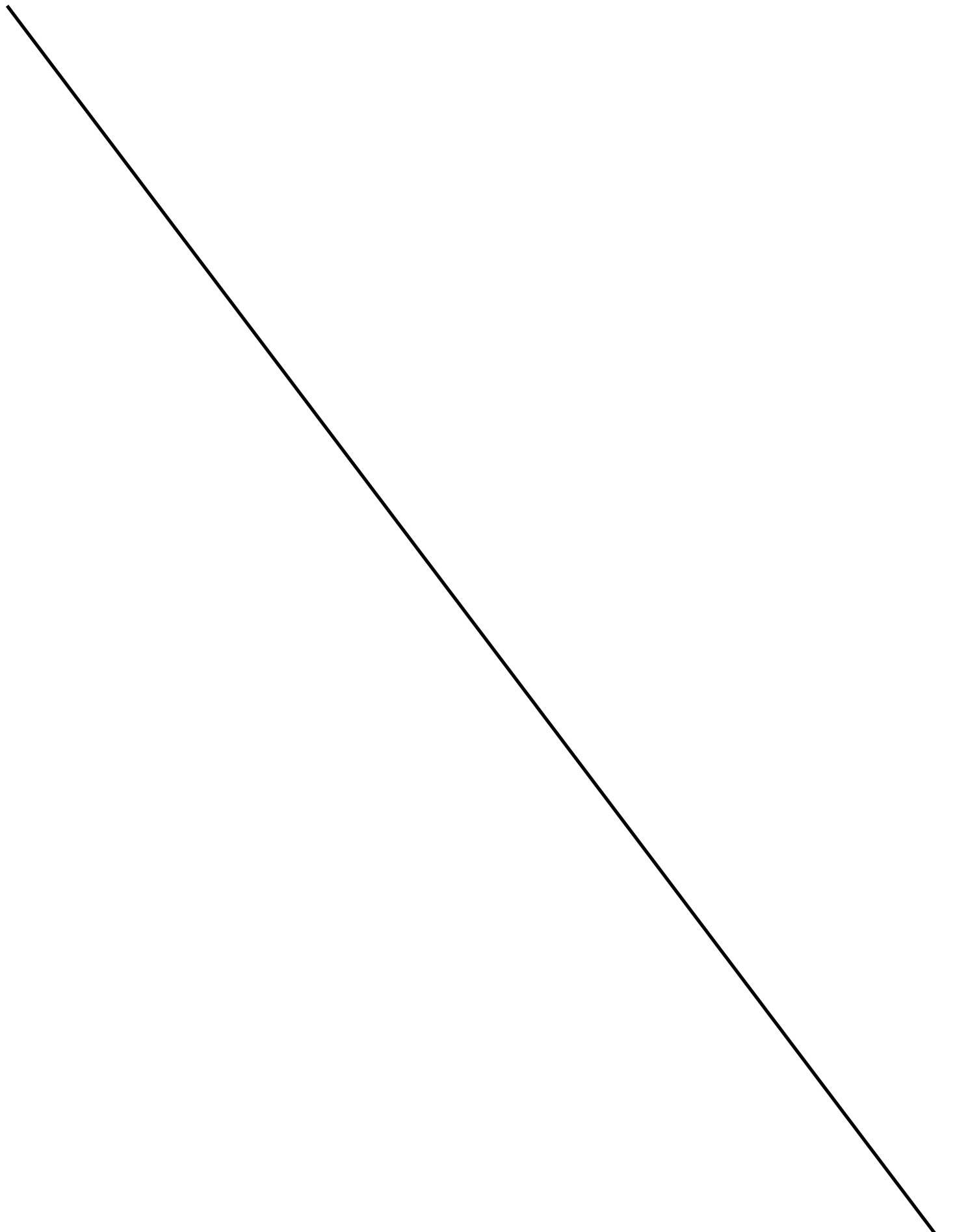
I am directed to inform you as per Ministry's Guidelines dated 25.10.2021, development of facilities which are of temporary nature will not attract FCA 1980 for eco-tourism purposes as they will not be considered as "non-forestry activities" for the purpose of the said Act.

Also, as per the Handbook Guidelines Para 11.10, construction of permanent structures for the purpose of eco-tourism on forest land shall be treated as non-forestry activity and they require prior approval of Central Government under FCA 1980.

In this context, I am directed to seek clarification regarding proposed structures and their composition built for eco-tourism purpose indicating whether they are permanent or temporary in nature.

Yours faithfully

Asstt. Conservator of Forests
O/o Chief Wildlife Warden



ANNEXURE 16

EXISTING STAFF STRENGTH OF GFDC

1	Managing Director	1
2	General Manager (on Deputation)	1
3	Manager (Finance & Admin)(on Deputation)	1
4	Head Clerk (on Deputation)	1
5	Accountant	1
6	Lower Divisional Clerk (Reguler on Deputation)	1
7	Lower Divisional Clerk (on Contract basis)	2
8	Accounts clerk cum Computer Operator (on Contract basis)	2
9	Driver (Regular)	2

10	Driver (on Contract basis)	4
11	Range Forest Officer (on Deputation)	2
12	Deputy Range Forest Officer (on Deputation)	3
13	Round Forester (on Deputation)	4
14	Forest Guard(on Deputation)	22
15	Regular Labour (on Deputation)	2
16	T.S.L (Temporary Status Labour)	72

F. No. 1-57/2014 WL (part-8)
Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Wildlife Division

First Floor, Agni Wing,
Indira Paryavaran Bhawan,
Jor Bagh Road, Aliganj,
New Delhi - 110003.

Dated: 29th October 2021

Principal Secretary (Forests),
All States/Union Territories.

Sub: Guidelines for sustainable eco-tourism in forest and wildlife areas-2021

Sir,

Forests and wildlife are inseparable elements of environmental integrity and therefore, a participatory approach towards building the intricate interface between humans and forests is imperative.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has prepared the 'Guidelines for sustainable Ecotourism in forest and wildlife areas-2021'. The undersigned is directed to enclosed a copy of the said guidelines for ready reference (**Annexure**).

The States/Union Territories may take further action, as appropriate, in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

29.10.21

(Rakesh Kumar Jagenia)
Deputy Inspector General of Forests (WL)
Email: digwl-mefcc@gov.in

Encl: As above.

Copy to:

1. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forests & Head of Forest Force (HoFF), All States /Union Territories.
2. The Chief Wild Life Warden, All States/ Union Territories.
3. Inspector General of Forests, Forest Conservation Division, MoEFCC, New Delhi.
4. PSO to ADGF (WL) PPS to IGF (WL), MoEFCC, New Delhi.

Government of India
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Guidelines on Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Forest and Wildlife Areas 2021

1. BACKGROUND

Forests and wildlife are elements of nature and inseparable parts of the environment. Because of the intricate nature of interface between nature and human beings, nature conservation entails interactions with people as a central concept. Such interaction includes not only the forest fringe dwellers but also those who are living away from the forests for the purpose of creating experience for the visitors. Eco-tourism may be developed in and around designated sites in forest and wildlife rich areas and ex-situ conservation areas, and such designated sites may include sites of biological, geographical, geo-physical and eco-heritage importance such as mangroves, sacred groves, mudflats, beaches, streams, wetlands, waterfalls, rivers, hills, caves, etc.

Eco-tourism has the potential to create significant opportunities for building public awareness and mass movement towards conservation of nature and natural resources while expanding overall returns to the economy, improving skill base, creating new knowledge and green jobs, and improving the livelihoods of the local communities.[1] On the other hand, eco-tourism if not practiced in a science-based manner may adversely affect nature on a permanent basis. The Guidelines on Sustainable Eco-Tourism in Forest and Wildlife Areas 2021 (hereinafter referred to as the Guidelines or the Eco-Tourism Guidelines), therefore, lays the framework for practising and promoting sustainable eco-tourism by maximising outputs that support nature and natural resources in their original forms while minimising any negative externalities arising out of interactions between people and nature.

The Guidelines recognise that besides the popular sites located in Protected Areas, which presently number over 900 across the country, many potential eco-tourism sites are located in public, community and private forests outside the Protected Areas as well. These Guidelines shall be applicable to ecotourism sites falling in all forest and wildlife areas irrespective of the ownership of the land.

2. GOAL

The overall goal of these Guidelines is promoting better understanding of nature and wildlife conservation while generating income and opportunities for the local communities in an ecologically, culturally and economically sustainable manner.

3. OBJECTIVES

The Guidelines seek to achieve the following objectives:

i. Promote low impact nature tourism which ensures ecological integrity of the eco-tourism sites and its environment;

ii. Promote biodiversity, traditional ecological knowledge and heritage values of India's wilderness;

iii. Promote engagement of local communities in nature tourism in a manner that enriches local economy and encourages sustainable use of indigenous materials through financially viable value chains thereby helping such local communities become "***AtmaNirbhar***"

iv. Promote partnerships amongst stakeholders for mobilising resources and developing and promoting nature tourism, as well equitable sharing of benefits.

v. Enhancing potential of India as a global eco-tourism destination.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ECO-TOURISM

(i) Eco-tourism planning: Eco-tourism shall be promoted on the basis of science based planning. The plan shall form part of the duly approved Working Plan or Management Plan or Conservation Plan of the forest or wildlife area as the case may be, and shall include the carrying-capacity analysis based description of the eco-tourism site, time, duration, route, mode of travel and number of persons for visitations, and any support infrastructure needed. Wherever feasible, the eco-tourism plan will also be dovetailed with the *Gram Panchayat* Development Plan. The Protected Area (PA) manager along with a third party shall determine the carrying-capacity of eco-tourism site by taking into account the wide diversity of environmental, physical, social and economic criteria of development and management of eco-tourism sites as well as institutional capacities of their managers. The Eco-tourism plan needs to also factor in aspects of control of plastic pollution, waste management, noise pollution, sewage treatment and disposal, etc. The Eco-Tourism guidelines issued by the National Tiger Conservation Authority shall be applicable to Eco-tourism in Tiger Reserves in the country.

(ii) Eco-tourism zonation: The eco-tourism plan shall appropriately demarcate the eco-tourism zone upon assessment of management requirements of the target wildlife, the habitat or the geographical entity, and their behavioural and ecological characteristics. The eco-tourism zonation shall particularly ensure that the ecological integrity of the site, including breeding areas of wildlife and tribal habitations particularly PVTGs remains protected. The zonation shall also ensure that safeguards provided in the Forest Rights Act, 2006 are fully respected.

(iii) Resource mobilisation and community participation: The local community shall be the key stakeholder of eco-tourism. Central government will provide for participatory frameworks that encourage resource mobilisation by a group of stakeholders in development, operation and maintenance of eco-tourism zones. These frameworks shall ensure that equitable benefits flow from eco-tourism accrues, besides resource investors, to local communities, tribals and other traditional forest dwellers including by way of enhanced livelihood opportunities. Further, keeping in view that most eco-tourism sites are located in remote places and small-scale operators predominate, suitable programme may be taken up by the Central Government to facilitate eco-tourism operators to access incentives allowed to the tourism sector in a timely and adequate manner.

(iv) Eco-tourism site development: The Eco-tourism site shall be developed only in eco-tourism zone and in eco-friendly manner. While developing support infrastructure for eco-tourism it shall be ensured that the natural profile and ecological integrity of the ecotourism site including its biodiversity value is maintained. Any ecotourism facility or structure on forest lands shall be subject to the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act 1980. However, no permanent structure shall be made /constructed to create ecotourism facility/structure, but temporary structures/facility made predominantly of natural material of local origin may be allowed in Protected Area or on forest land. Such ecotourism facility/structure shall be part of the approved Working Plan/Management Plan/Working Scheme. Home stay managed by local communities on non-forest land shall be promoted. States may develop benchmarks/ standardized criteria based on site specificity, for adoption of best practices in eco-tourism including sustainable ecological management of the site, customer satisfaction, harmony with local culture and design, local construction material used, employment types, environmental education facilities. Further, safety measures, especially for managing fire, flood, landslide, needs to be inbuilt into the ecotourism site development plan and adequate system needs to be in place for efficiently managing such disasters.

(v) Inter-sectoral synergy: The central government will work towards prioritisation of action with regard to developing eco-tourism sites across the country and improving the way in which action on eco-tourism is coordinated with other sectors and synergies are exploited in the best possible manner. Regulations should be streamlined wherever possible and processes and procedures should be simplified while taking into consideration the objectives of relevant sectoral policies.

(vi)Promoting eco-tourism entrepreneurship: Concerted action will be taken for expanding entrepreneurship opportunities for stakeholders engaged in eco-tourism with due priority to the members of local communities and those whose livelihoods have been impacted because of actions such as closure of the Protected Area for forest product extraction. The focus will be on increasing productivity, boosting the skills and competencies of stakeholders at all levels, and the needed structural changes will be supported and strengthened. Start-ups will be supported through training, coaching, financial support and other benefits including through the incubators established under various government programmes.

5. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The following are the broad framework for implementation of the Eco-tourism Guidelines:

Strategy i: Identification of potential sites: Each State may identify sites for eco-tourism through a participatory process involving stakeholders, particularly the local communities, and make a priority list for development of such sites. Area managers will initiate eco-tourism planning based on carrying-capacity analysis, including identification of eco-tourism zones, identification of potential partners, categorisation of infrastructure support that may be allowed, funding sources, and training and capacity building needs of the partners through a multi-stakeholder dialogue process. Spatially cluster approach to eco-tourism infrastructure will be promoted to larger blocks of contiguous habitats so as to minimise adverse ecological impacts on a larger area. An indicative list of potential eco-tourism sites is at Annexure I. However, States/UTs may develop ecotourism sites which has high potential.

An Eco-tourism Plan shall be prepared for every eco-tourism site. The Plan shall be approved and prepared for sites under various controls as follows:

i. For Sites within forest/protected areas: The Eco-tourism Plan for the areas falling inside the notified forest/protected areas shall form part of duly approved Working Plan/Management Plan/ Working Scheme.

ii. For Sites falling within Eco-sensitive Zones: All new Eco-tourism activities or expansion of existing tourism activities within the Eco-sensitive Zone (on non-forest land) shall be as per the Tourism Master Plan for the Eco-sensitive Zone. The Eco-tourism Master Plan shall be prepared by Department of Tourism in consultation with State Departments of Environment and Forests. The Tourism Master Plan shall form a component of the Zonal Master Plan and until the Zonal Master Plan is approved, development for tourism and expansion of existing tourism activities shall be permitted by the concerned regulatory authorities based on the actual site specific scrutiny and recommendation of the Monitoring Committee. Hotel/resort or commercial establishment construction shall be taken up inside the Eco-sensitive Zone as per the ESZ notification of the National Park/Sanctuary.

Strategy ii: Funding support: Compatible funding instruments that cater to the specific challenges of the eco-tourism sector, particularly the small and geographically fragmented nature of enterprises, is key to sustainable eco-tourism promotion. Financial institutions may be encouraged to develop targeted financial instruments for the eco-tourism entrepreneurs at the local level. Public funding for eco-tourism promotion, monitoring and innovation may be made available, including for non-repayable loans and guarantees, start-up grants and marketing of eco-tourism places.

Strategy iii: Usage of Information Technology: The role of digitalisation both as a driver and an enabler of eco-tourism shall be recognised. In particular, digitalisation will be used to facilitate new eco-tourism products, such as virtual tours, competitive exploration, etc., services, business processes and models. National and sub-national projects will be launched to undertake analysis of the needs of various partners and users (visitors) of eco-tourism projects, and develop scenarios for eco-tourism support for the future, and active steps will be taken for transfer of knowledge to partners including by making such knowledge public wherever feasible. In recognition of the fact that partners (e.g. service providers) in eco-tourism are mainly small entities, and their limited capabilities of using digital services combined with possible use of multitude of digital platforms and inability to create economies of scale, pose significant challenge. National and sub-national level data integration platforms to analyse visitors behaviour and preferences will be developed, and additional sources such as social media engagement, newsletter statistics, booking data, media and marketing reports, etc will be used.

Strategy iv: Capacity building: Despite wider and growing attraction to eco-tourism, the challenges emanating from the field such as geographically fragmented and small nature of sites, small business structure and high seasonality and the consequent visitor number fluctuation, are significant. On the other hand, it offers significant entrepreneurial and labour market opportunity for the local communities. With increased numbers of eco-tourism sites the eco-tourism sector may become a supplier of low return exchangeable standard products making private investment in eco-tourism less attractive. The capacity of field functionaries of different stakeholders, especially the eco-tourism site managers and the local communities, will be steadily built to innovate and meet the present and future challenges of the sector, and international best practices as suited to local conditions will be internalised. Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and other such institutes will be encouraged to develop specific programmes for local communities and small operators engaged in eco-tourism.

Strategy v: Benefit sharing: Community-based tourism will be promoted as a preferred form of eco-tourism. While eco-tourism will create new wage employment and private entrepreneurial income for the respective stakeholders, fair and equitable benefit sharing of common eco-tourism revenues with the local community is key to sustainability. Given the diversity of stakeholders, scale of operations and geographically fragmented nature of eco-tourism sites, appropriate mechanisms for sharing of benefits with the local eco-development committees / forest protection committees will be developed by the respective State Government for different types of eco-tourism sites falling on government lands. Such benefit sharing mechanisms shall recognise that the local community has the highest stake in eco-tourism and the revenue generated has to be also ploughed back for development and maintenance of the eco-tourism sites. Transparent mechanism for revenue collection from common eco-tourism activities user charges, entry fees, concessions, fines and penalties, etc. through a Foundation established at the appropriate local level, and sharing of revenue with stakeholders, particularly local communities, has served as best practise in many parts of the world and the same duly incorporated by the respective State governments. Considering that

eco-tourism is mostly a seasonal activity, the Eco-Tourism Plans should include measures to reduce financial overdependence of the local community on eco-tourism, and the same should be supported by the district level plan approval committees. Such measures may include capacity building of the communities with respect to processing and marketing of bio-cultural products to ensure that communities remain attached to preservation of local ecology. The Central government will support development of such mechanisms through sharing of international experiences and coordination with participating states and national entities in case the stated eco-tourism enterprise covers sites across States and/ or national entities are involved.

Strategy vi: Education and outreach: For effective use of the eco-tourism potential of the area, effective communication plan covering all eco-tourism sites of a State will be drawn by the State Governments with the help of expert organsiations. The Plan, among other relevant information, will include information to the tourists on the eco-system services and intangible benefits provided by the area. The communication plan will include measures to promote partnerships between the eco-tourism project and socially responsible companies. Use of modern technologies such as electronic visual tools and well equipped modern interpretation centre at the eco-tourism site will be encouraged through this Plan to encourage self-learning by visitors. The Plan will also lay emphasis on appropriate signages for generating awareness among the visitors regarding the safety and risk factors in the eco-tourism zone and safety protocol and information material on the area for the visitors. The Central government will support the outreach of States' eco-tourism potential for international tourists in a programmatic manner.

Strategy vii: Monitoring: Each eco-tourism plan will invariably include a dynamic monitoring mechanism, covering multiple biological parameters to monitor stress on wildlife vis-a-vis number and patterns of tourist visitation and their level of satisfaction, involvement of local people, scope for improvement in flow of eco-system services, etc. The monitoring will also include mechanisms to ensure that rigorous practices are in place to prevent biological invasion, disease transmission, and air, water, noise or light pollution. The States Governments/UT Administrations shall endeavour to maintain service level quality standards through appropriate certification/rating protocols.

The States shall endeavour to initiate a ranking system for the respective ecotourism sites.

There shall be regular monitoring by the State Governments and Union Territories on the implementation of the guidelines spelt out in the Guidelines for Sustainable Ecotourism in forest and wildlife areas-2021.

District, State and National level monitoring committees comprising of representatives of relevant stakeholder departments, the local communities, civil societies, and the corporate organisations will be constituted to oversee the implementation of this Guidelines including mobilisation of the required technical, financial and human resource support for eco-tourism plans.

Strategy viii: Review: The National level eco-tourism monitoring committee will review the Eco-Tourism Guidelines every three years and make recommendation to the Central Government.

***

[1]Wherever 'local community' has been used in this Guidelines, it will mean to include Schedule Tribe and other traditional forest dwellers as per Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006, which is referred hereinafter as FRA 2006 in short.

Annexure I

Potential Sites in India for Ecotourism (Illustrative)

S.No.	State/ UT Administration	Name of Protected Area
	Andaman & Nicobar Islands	
1		Mahatama Gandhi Marine (Wandoor) NP
2		Mount Harriett NP
3		Ross Island WLS
	Andhra Pradesh	
4		Coringa WLS
5		Pulicat Lake WLS
	Arunachal Pradesh	
6		Itanagar WLS
	Assam	
7		Orang NP
8		DeeporBeel WLS
9		Hollongapar Gibbon WLS
10		Pabitora WLS
	Bihar	
11		Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary
	Chandigarh	
12		City Bird WLS
13		Sukhna Lake WLS
	Chhattisgarh	
14		Kanger Valley NP
15		Pamed Wild Buffalo WLS
	Goa	
16		BhagwanMahavir WLS
17		Dr. Salim Ali Bird (Chorao) WLS
	Gujarat	
18		Gir National Park & WLS &Gir Landscape
19		Marine (Gulf of Kachchh) NP
20		Barda WLS
21		Girnar WLS

22		Jessore Sloth Bear WLS
23		Kachchh Desert WLS
24		NalSarovar Bird WLS
25		Thol Lake WLS
26		Wild Ass WLS
	Haryana	
27		Sultanpur NP
28		Morni Hills (Khol-Hi-Raitan) WLS
29		Nahar WLS
	Himachal Pradesh	
20		Great Himalayan NP
31		Dhauladhar WLS
32		Kalatop-Khajjiar WLS
33		Kibber WLS
34		Manali WLS
35		Pong Dam Lake WLS
36		Renuka WLS
	Jammu & Kashmir	
37		Dachigam NP
38		Gulmarg WLS
	Laddakh	
39		Hemis NP
40		Changthang WLS
	Jharkhand	
41		Dalma WLS
	Karnataka	
42		Bannerghatta NP
43		Kudremukh NP
44		Cauvery WLS
45		Daroji Bear WLS
46		Pushpagiri WLS
	Kerala	
47		Eravikulam NP
48		Silent Valley NP
49		Thattekad Bird WLS
	Lakshadweep	
50		Pitti Island Bird Sanvtuary
	Madhya Pradesh	
51		Madhav NP
52		National Chambal WLS

53		Pachmarhi WLS
	Maharashtra	
54		Sanjay Gandhi (Borivilli) NP
55		Lonar WLS
56		Thane Creek Flamingo WLS
	Manipur	
57		Keibul-Lamjao NP
	Meghalaya	
58		Balphakram NP
59		Nokrek Ridge NP
	Mizoram	
60		Phawngpui Blue Mountain National Park
	Nagaland	
61		Intanki NP
	Punjab	
62		Harike Lake WLS
63		Beas Conservation Reserve
	Odisha	
64		Bhitarkanika WLS & NP
65		Chilika (Nalaban) WLS
66		Gahirmatha (Marine) WLS
67		Nandankanan WLS
	Rajasthan	
68		Keoladeo Ghana NP
69		Desert National Park Sanctuary
70		Mount Abu WLS
71		National Chambal WLS
	Sikkim	
72		Khangchendzonga NP
73		Maenam WLS
	Tamil Nadu	
74		Gulf of Mannar Marine NP
75		Vedanthangal WLS
76		Point Calimere WLS
	Telangana	
77		KasuBrahmananda Reddy NP

	Tripura	
78		Clouded Leopard NP
79		Trishna WLS
	Uttar Pradesh	
80		Katerniaghat WLS
81		National Chambal WLS
82		KachuaWLS
	Uttarakhand	
83		Gangotri NP
84		Nanda Devi NP
85		Valley of Flowers NP
86		Kedarnath WLS
	West Bengal	
87		Gorumara NP
88		Jaldapara NP
89		Neora Valley NP
90		Singalila NP

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NATIONAL WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN
(2017— 2031)

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India

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Management of
Tourism in Wildlife Areas

X. Management of Tourism in Wildlife Areas

Overview and Objectives

1. Eco-friendly and regulated wildlife-based tourism (also referred to as eco-tourism) has the potential to be a vital conservation tool as it helps win public support for wildlife conservation. However, in recent years mushrooming of tourism facilities has led to overuse, disturbance and serious management problems in a number of PAs.

2. In case of any conflict between tourism and conservation interests of a PA, the paradigm for decision must be that tourism exists for the PAs and not vice versa, and that demands of tourism must be subservient to and in consonance with the conservation interests of PA. While revenues earned from tourism can help the management of the PA, maximization of income must never override the main goal of tourism viz. to educate the visitor and create in them a respect for nature.

3. The MoEFCC, NTCA and some of the SFDs have framed guidelines for making tourism in TRs and PAs eco-friendly and educative, but the implementation of these guidelines offers a lot of scope for improvement.

4. As stipulated by the National Tourism Policy-2002, eco-tourism must primarily involve and benefit local communities. Goals set for the MoEFCC in the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) include promotion of eco-tourism and building capacity of Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) for management of eco-tourism. Long term plans for each PA and forestlands outside PAs should be framed to diversify tourism activities to lesser known PAs and non-PAs, thereby reducing pressure of tourism on iconic PAs. One of the monitorable targets set for the 12th Plan is to prepare Integrated Eco-tourism District Plans covering 10% of all potential PAs by 2017. There is a great scope for enhancing the coverage of PAs, including wetland PAs (WPAs) and coastal / marine PAs (CMPAs) by eco-tourism.

5. The objective of wildlife tourism should be to inculcate amongst the visitors empathy for nature and to provide a communion with nature, rather than to merely ensure maximum sightings of charismatic wild animals. Related activities, such as birding, hiking, trekking, plant-hunting and culture tourism, need to be promoted. Students of all levels must be encouraged to visit PAs and participate in conservation activities therein, and these educative processes should be facilitated through concessions and park interpretations.

6. Regular monitoring of the impacts of tourism is needed. The parameters for such an evaluation should include ecological effects on the habitat, animal behaviour as well as secondary effects caused by changes in lifestyles and cultures of local populations. Representatives

from local communities, local NGOs and field personnel should be a part of eco-tourism committees that monitor and regulate tourism activities in the area. These committees should help develop tourism and conservation plans and strategies.

7. Strict guidelines for conservation of energy and water, and disposal of waste and sewerage need to be laid down and implemented for existing and new tourism facilities. New tourist residential facilities and eateries must be established outside PAs and all possible efforts should be made to relocate the ones existing inside PAs to suitable sites outside.

Action Required

1. Identify potential tourism areas including zoos, safari parks, etc.
2. Prepare tourism plans based on the prescribed guidelines for promoting sustainable ecotourism in TRs, PAs (including WPAs and CMPAs) and the mountain eco-systems.
3. Develop standards and guidelines to prevent damage to wildlife and habitats, in particular to mountain vegetation, wetlands and marine habitats including coral beds.
4. Frame rules and regulations for visitors' conduct which should be widely publicised among tourists and tourism agencies as well as prominently displayed on public notice boards in all tourism sites.
5. Create a cadre of local communities who can be trained as nature guides and strengthen the capacity of the local communities and the tourism agencies for managing responsible and sustainable tourism.
6. Institutionalise a mechanism for ploughing back a part of the income generated from wildlife tourism for management of TRs and PAs and eco-development of the local communities.

Priority Projects

1.1. Identify, compile and maintain data regarding the potential tourism areas which may include lesser known PAs, forestlands outside PAs, zoos, safari parks, etc.

Timing: To start in 2017 and to be completed by 2019; to be updated regularly thereafter.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA, CZA, SFDs and State Tourism Departments.

2.1. Bring in a mechanism for implementation of sustainable tourism in Wildlife Areas, WPAs, CMPAs and the mountain eco-systems, in accordance with the prescribed guidelines. Construction or expansion of tourism facilities must not be allowed within the limits of TRs and PAs and efforts should be made to shift out the existing ones.

Timing: To start in 2017 and continue through the plan period.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), SFDs and State Tourism Departments.

2.2. Prepare tourism plans for all TRs, PAs (including WPAs and CMPAs) forestlands and the mountain eco-systems either as a part of existing Management Plans / Working Plans or separate ones.

Timing: To start in 2017 and to be completed by 2022.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA and SFDs.

3.1. Develop impact assessment techniques and standards that can be used by wildlife managers to evaluate negative impacts of tourism on soil, water resources, vegetation, animal life, sanitation, cultural environment, etc.

Timing: To start in 2017 and to be completed by 2019.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA, SFDs, Scientific Institutes and suitable NGOs.

3.2. Assess the impact of tourism on TRs, PAs (including WPAs and CMPAs), forestlands and the mountain eco-systems and integrate its outcomes in the successive eco-tourism plans.

Timing: Impact assessment to start in 2019 and to be completed by 2021; to be repeated every 5 years thereafter.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA, SFDs, Scientific Institutes and suitable NGOs.

3.3. Develop best practices guidelines to promote sustainable wetland tourism including angling such as catch-and-release, water sports and other tourism related activities.

Timing: Guidelines to be developed by 2018; implementation to continue through the plan period.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, SFDs, State Tourism Departments, Scientific Institutes and suitable NGOs.

3.4. Develop stringent standards for waste disposal, energy and water consumption, construction plans and materials used therein.

Timing: To start in 2017 and to be completed by 2020.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA, SFDs, Scientific Institutes and suitable NGOs.

3.5. Impose a ceiling on the number of tourists and vehicles permitted to enter TRs and PAs keeping in mind individual characteristics of the TR or PA. The wildlife mangers must be empowered to use their discretion in closing off certain sensitive areas of the TR or PA (e.g., an area where a tiger has littered recently).

Timing: To start in 2018 and continue through the plan period.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, NTCA, and SFDs.

4.1. Frame rules and regulations for visitors' conduct in TRs, PAs (including WPAs and CMPAs), forestlands and the mountain eco-systems.

Timing: Rules to be framed by 2018 and implementation to continue through the plan period.

Responsibility: MoEFCC, MoT, NTCA, SFDs and State Tourism Departments.

4.2. Strengthen visitors' safety guidelines in TRs, PAs (including WPAs and CMPAs), forestlands and the mountain eco-systems and ensure their compliance.

Timing: To start in 2018 and continue through the plan period.

Responsibility: SFDs, NTCA, SFDs and State Tourism Departments.

5.1. Conduct capacity building programmes for office bearers / members of JFMC, Forest Development Agencies (FDAs), Village Forests, *Vana Panchayats* and Local Bodies in management of eco-tourism facilities including homestays in TRs, PAs (including WPAs and CMPAs),

File No. 1-790 (p)
Government of Goa
Department of Forest
NA

Date : 22/07/2024

To,

Nandakumar Parab
GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
38, D43C7, Dharbandora, South Goa, KOLEM, GOA 403001
mdgfdc@gmail.com

Sub: Proposal for Development of Eco-Camp at Collem, South Goa regarding.

Ref: WL/GA/Others/443396/2023

Sir,

Reference is invited to the following proposal:

i) WL Identification No. (UCN)	WL23A0102GA516800N
ii) Name of the Project	Development of Eco-Camps at Collem, South Goa
iii) Category of the project	Others(please specify)
iv) Name of User Agency	GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
v) Location of Project(District,State)	38, D43c7, Dharbandora, South Goa, Kolem, Goa, Goa

The above proposal was considered and recommended/approved by the Standing Committee of the National Board of Wild Life in its 77 meeting held on 30/01/2024 subject to certain conditions.

In view of the recommendations made by the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wild Life, the permission is hereby granted under section 35 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 for the project over an area 2.096 (area in ha) in the Bhagvan Mahaveer National Park (name of the area) subject to the following conditions:-

1. The proposed eco-tourism site at Aranyak Campsite is in Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park is part of the Eco-tourism zone in the proposed Management Plan. The draft Management Plan is already approved. All the eco-tourism related activities to be undertaken strictly under the provisions of WLPA,1972 and as per the prescriptions of approved Management Plan.
2. As mentioned in the justifications of the Proposal, the Eco-tourism facility are to be developed by using eco-friendly materials and shall be of non -permanent type of structures as mentioned in the act and policy.

3. Entire eco-tourism complex will be a green building with provisions of solar lights, solar fencing, 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. Local Panchayat will also be involved in managing both solid and wet waste. No waste and waste water will be disposed in the WLS. Single Use Plastics and Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same shall be strictly complied.

4. As movement of wild animals like Gaur, Sloth Bear, Tiger etc are recorded at site and in nearby areas, adequate measures to be taken while developing the project site, assets and project activities considering the safety of wild animals and Visitors. As mentioned in the Project Proposal, Solar fencing shall be erected around the Project site as per established norms without obstructing free movement of wild animals.

5. As snakes and other reptiles are also recorded in the surrounding areas, eco-camps and common facilities are to be designed accordingly. Free movement of visitors shall not be allowed. Venturing out into surrounding forest areas except authorized routes must be not allowed. The proposed activities like Bird Walk, Treks are to be done strictly under the supervision of the authorized Nature Guides. Further GFDC/UA shall only undertake such Treks, Bird Walks, Safaris etc. in routes identified by the Department in a prescribed manner.

6. Both indoor and outdoor lightings may be kept minimum inside the Eco-camp. Bright lights/ Flood lights to be avoided. Sombre lights with movement sensors may be encouraged in the common area. Loud Music and Noise in any form shall not be allowed. Genset is proposed in the Project Proposal. Silent or Sound Proof Generator is recommended to reduce the disturbance.

7. The flora and fauna of the Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park and their movement shall not be disturbed.

from: NA

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CAF
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Digi-Payment Gateway
Compliance Monitoring
e2e Online Processing

Signature Not Verified

Digitally signed by Umakant
Chief Wild Life Warden

Date: 2024.07.22 12:59:36 IST

-3/N-

O/o, Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests, 25/C
Forest Department
Altinho-Goa.

NOTE

The Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC), has proposed for utilization of 2.096 ha and 0.666 ha of wildlife area in Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park and Madei Wildlife Sanctuary respectively for development of Eco-tourism facility.

Accordingly, the Eco-tourism sites of Aranyak camp site at Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary & National Park and Surla of Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary has been approved by National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) for taking up Eco-tourism activities by Goa Forest Department, the approval of NBWL was communicated to Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC), permitting them to take up development works. Copy of same is enclosed as **(Annexure A & B).**

However, the approval of State Government is yet to be sought formally for providing the eco-tourism site for operation and maintenance to Goa Forest Development Corporation along with assets available at Aranyak Camp site.] X

Therefore, necessary approval from State Government may be solicited as proposed above please.

Submitted please.

17/1/25
Conservator of Forests
(Wildlife & Eco-tourism)

Office of Forest Minister
Inward No. 828
Date: 21/1/25

APCCF & CWLW Preceding note may be referred please. Approval of the State Government is sought for allowing GFDC for operation & maintenance of Eco tourism sites at Aranyak Camp at BMWLS & NP & Surla of Mhadei WLS, the NBWL approval for which has already been received and communicated to GFDC

17/1

PCCF Approval of the state Govt. is solicited for the proposal at X above.

20.1.

Chief secretary 21/01/25

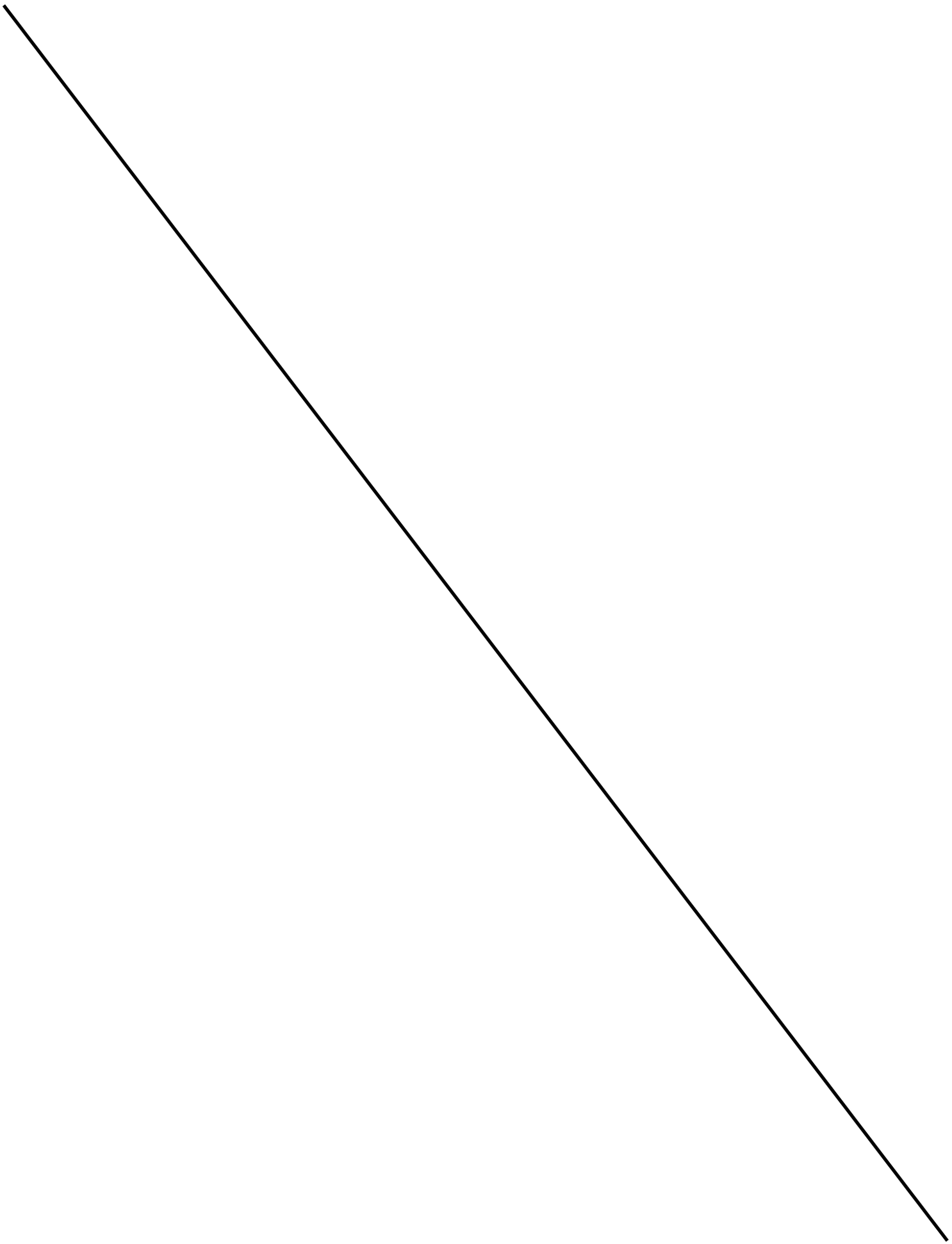
Hon'ble Min. (Forests) 'X' above is approved.

Ver Pd 25/1/25

P.C.C.F. GM No. 4321
Dt. 20/01/2025

Office of Forest Minister
Inward No. 14001065
Date: 21/1/2025

Office of Forest Minister
Inward No. 1416 44892
Date: 20 JAN 2025



Government of Goa
Office of the Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests &
Chief Wildlife Warden,
Goa Van Bhawan,
Altinho, Panaji-Goa

Email:pccf-fore.goa@nic.in Tel:0832-2492521

No.CWLW-114/FD/2023-24/1620 Dated:04/02/2025

ORDER

Approval of the State government is hereby conveyed to Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) Panaji to operate & maintain the following ecotourism assets situated in 2.096 ha area of Aranyak camp site located within Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park for the purpose of eco-tourism, subject to the following conditions.

I. List of fixed assets

Sr. No	Particulars	Quantity
1	Single pole tent platform with washrooms	04 nos
2	Swiss tent with attached toilet	04 nos
3	Common dinning area	01 no
4	Kitchen	01 no
5	Amphitheatre	01 no
6	Pump house	01no
7	Open well attached with kirloskar water pump	01 no
8	Wooden viewing platform	01 no

II. List of other miscellaneous items

Sr. No	Particulars	Quantity
1	Wooden dinning table	01 no
2	Wooden dinning chair	04nos
3	Ceiling fan	04 Nos
4	Cooler	01 No
5	Cot	04 Nos
6	Mattress	04 Nos
7	Water solar heater	01 no
8	Merry go round	01 No
9	Swing (zula)	01 No
10	Spring duck	02 Nos
11	Slider	01 No
12	See saw	01 No
13	Playground climber	01 No
14	Sprinkler	20nos

Terms and Conditions

1. Approval is subject to applicable Laws/Acts Guidelines issued by the State & union Government from time to time, and conditions stipulated by the Chief Wildlife Warden, Goa.
2. The land in which eco-tourism & public amenities are situated shall continue to be forest land under the ownership of Forest Department and such forest land cannot be broken for development, mortgaged, reassigned or sub-leased without the prior approval of competent authority, except in accordance with the approval granted by the NBWL in this regard.
3. The condition stipulated by MOEF&CC vide their letter No. WL-6/42/2024 dated 9th February 2024 shall be strictly adhered to.
4. GFDC may conduct eco-tourism activities from revenue generated by them subject to the financial concurrance by Finance Department for the same.
5. GFDC may conduct ecotourism activities in collaboration with experts/naturalist etc having specialisation in nature & wildlife tourism.
6. Local community should be involved.
7. The operation of property is further subject to the concurrence of Finance Department as regard to revision of tariff if any, revenue sharing between GFDC & Forest Department and other related issues. For this purpose a comprehensive proposal will be submitted by GFDC for obtaining concurrence of Finance Department.

This issues with the approval of competent authority.

This Order will come into force with immediate effect, until further orders.

(Naveen Kumar. P) IFS 4/2/25
Conservator of Forests, Goa.
Government of Goa

Encl:-As above

To

1. Managing Director ,Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited, Panaji, Goa for information & necessary action
2. Dy. Conservator of Forests (Wildlife & Eco-tourism) North, Panaji, (North Goa) for information.

Copy to:-

1. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Forest Department, for kind information.
2. O.S.D. to Hon'ble Minister for Forests, Goa for kind information.
3. Chairperson, Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited, Goa for kind information.

(A GOVT. OF GOA UNDERTAKING)
GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD
1ST LIFT, 3RD FLOOR, JUNTA HOUSE
PANAJI – GOA
CIN NO.U01133GA1997SGC002323
Phone No. 0832-2421728, 2421845 Fax: 2421728 e-mail: mdgfdc@gmail.com

No. II/GFDC/ARANYAK/PON/ 2025-26/980 Dated:-26 .06.2025

To,
M/s. UNIFAB Infra Projects Private Limited
H. No.-44/47, Nuwa Colony,
Naguem, Valpoi, Sattari Goa.

WORK ORDER

Sub: - Construction of 10 MS Prefab Hut Structures at Aranyak Campsite, Collem.
Ref: - Tender No. II/GFDC/ARANYAK/PON/ 2025-26, Dated 06/05/2025

Sir,

I am directed to inform your Quotation for Construction of 10 MS Prefab Hut Structures at Aranyak Campsite, Collem, Ponda-Goa at your quoted rates amounting to Rs. 11,99,007.200/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Ninety Nine Thousand Seven Only) including GST has been accepted by the Managing Director of this Corporation. You are therefore directed to execute the above work immediately on receipt of this work order.

The work should be carried out **within 90 days** from the date of receipt of this work order and that the work shall be executed strictly as per the terms and conditions. The Range Forest Officer, Ponda may be contacted for taking possession of site and starting the work as per terms and conditions of quotation.

You may submit your bill in duplicate after completion of the said work to Range Forest officer, Ponda for settlement.

Yours faithfully,

(Upadesh D.S. Kossambe)
Manager (Fin. & Admn.)

Copy to:
1. Range Forest Officer, GFDC Ponda for information.
2. O/C
3. G/F

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOPMENT CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

BOQ Summary Details

Tender Title: Construction of 10 Nos of new MS Prefab Hut Structures at Aranyak Campsite, Collem.

Tender ID: 2025_GFDCL_22506_1

Sheet Name	Sl.No	Bidder Name	Amount	Bid Rank
BoQ1	1	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd (BID ID -48368)	1199007.200	L1
	2	SAGLANI FURNITURE (BID ID -48342)	1208105.240	L2

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

Government eProcurement System
Created By: Tukaram Fadte
Created Date/Time: 22-May-2025 03:38 PM
Tender Title: Construction of 10 Nos of new MS Prefab Hut Structures at Aranyak Campsite, Collem.
Tender ID: 2025_GFDCL_22506_1

Tender Inviting Authority: MANAGING DIRECTOR GOA FOREST DEVLOPMENT CORPORATION LTD PANJIM GOA

Name of Work: CONSTRUCTION OF 10 MS PREFABBHUT STRUCTURES BAT ARANYAK CAMPSITE COLLEM

Tender No: NO II/GFDC/ARANYAK/PON/25-26 DATED:- 06/ 05 /2025.

SCHEDULE OF WORK / ITEM(S)

Sl.No	Description of Work / Item(s)	No.of Qty	Units	Estimated Rate	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd (GSTN-NA) BID ID -48368		SAGLANI FURNITURE (GSTN-NA) BID ID -48342		L1 Amount	L1 Vendor
					Rate	Amount	Rate	Amount		
1.00	Steel work in built up tubular (round, square or rectangular hollow tubes etc.) (Square Hollow Section (SHS) IS4923 /Rectangular Hollow Section (RHS) IS4923/ Circular Hollow Section (CHS) IS1161 closed Structural Steel of (SAIL, TATA. VIZAG, JSW ,APOLLO Steel Ltd.) make (Min Yeild Stress 310 Mpa)) trusses etc., including cutting, hoisting, fixing in position and applying a priming coat of approved steel primer, including welding and bolted with special shaped washers etc. complete. 80X80X3.2mm Rectangular hollow tube Weight @7.51kg/meter 50X25X2mm Rectangular hollow tube in walls Walls Horizontal sides Walls Vertical Front and Back Walls Horizontal Front and Back Balcony Harizontal Support Vertical Poles Balcony Roofing Vertical support Weight as per @2.15kg/meter 40 x 40 x 2.6mm square hollow tube Balcony Roofing Vertical support Weight as per @2.92kg/meter	1055.90	Kgs	0.00	145.000	180664.490	160.000	199353.920	180664.490	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
2.00	Providing and fixing Colouron Plus galvulium roofing Sheets of 0.5mm thick double ribbed trapezoidal profile coated 1080mm with cover width of 1020mm including all the accessories (JSW or equivalent make) but excluding the cost of purlins, rafters, trusses, flashings etc. complete as per the directions of the Engineer in charge. (Double Insulated)	93.60	Sqm	0.00	900.000	99403.200	600.000	66268.800	66268.800	SAGLANI FURNITURE

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
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3.00	Add for providing & fixing Flashings -[Corners, Ridges, valleys, gable end & Trims] (Girth upto 610mm) including all the accessories complete as per the directions of the Engineer in charge.	7.80	Metre	0.00	750.000	6903.000	1000.000	9204.000	6903.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
4.00	M.F. wall linging which includes 9.5/12.5 mm thick Gypsum board (conforming to IS : 2095 –1982) screw fixed to the ceiling section (0.55mm thick having a knurled web of 51.5 mm (double side wall) Deduction Door Deduction W1 Deduction W2	134.41	Sqm	0.00	600.000	95162.280	1400.000	222045.320	95162.280	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
5.00	Providing and Fixing WPC wall panelling of approved design and colour	76.40	Sqm	0.00	2482.000	223757.260	2900.000	261440.800	223757.260	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
6.00	Single Colour Foam Core FRP (Fiber Reinforced Polymer) Door Shutter Manufacture, Supply and Installation (including accessories as mentioned below) of EPEE or equivalent Goan make FRP (Fiber Reinforced Polymer) door shutter of specified thickness as per options below by using tray system with seasoned hard wood, moisture less than 17%, wood styles for Top rail and lock rails. FRP (Fiber Reinforced Polymer) laminate made up of 450 grams per sq.mts (gsm) chop strand matt and unsaturated polyester resin with viscosity range of 400/450 centipoises per second (cps) . The core of shutter will be filled as specified (Expanded Polystyrene Foam / Polyurethane Foam (EPS/PU) Foam). The shutter to be of single colour & water proof as well as mild acid / alkali resistant manufactured using RV TIFAC (R V Engineering College, Bangalore & Technology Information Forecasting & Assessment Council) technology in line with IS 13034 1990 test Standard in an ISO 9001 – 2015 certified factory. Accessories:i) S.S. Hinges 4" - 3 Nos ii) S.S. Latch - 1 No iii) Tower Bolt 5" - 2 Nos iv) Handle 5" - 2 Nos Shutter Thickness : b) 35mm	3.60	Sqm	0.00	2800.000	11894.400	4000.000	16992.000	11894.400	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
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7.00	Providing & fixing Single or multi shutter turn windows Yashashri make or equivalent, made out of upvc multi-cavity frames Sections of 60mm x 60mm x 2.5mm reinforced with G.I channel and double multi-shutters Division are made by using shash mullion having 50mm x 64mm x 2.5mm multi- cavity upvc section, reinforced with G.I. channel and shutters are made out of 50mm x 64mm x 2.5mm upvc section, Reinforced and welded in corners with EPDM Gaskets and using suitable glass bead with perfect hardware like hinges, handles, stays & 4mm clear Glass. Some portion of windows can be made fixed glass. The average weight of Turn window is 11.5 kg per sq mtr. These Upvc sections are tested by using BS 2782 & DIN 53459 test methods.	5.40	Sqm	0.00	8000.000	50976.000	7000.000	44604.000	44604.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
8.00	Painting three or more coats with acryllic exterior paint of approved brand and manufacture (such as weather shield,APEX) including applying one coat of cement primer and one coat of surface treatment etc. complete. Plinth	11.80	Sqm	0.00	250.000	3481.000	300.000	4177.200	3481.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
9.00	Providing and applying white cement based putty of average thickness 1.00mm of approved brand and manufacturer, over the plastered wall surface to prepare the surface even and smooth complete. Deduction Door Deduction W1 Deduction W2	57.45	Sqm	0.00	250.000	16947.750	300.000	20337.300	16947.750	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
10.00	Wall painting (two or more coats) with plastic emulsion paint of approved brand and manufacture on new work to give an even shade.	57.45	Sqm	0.00	300.000	20337.300	300.000	20337.300	20337.300	SAGLANI FURNITURE, Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
11.00	Earthwork in excavation by mechanical means (hydraulic excavator)/manual means in foundation pipeline trenches drain (not exceeding 1.5 m in width or 10 sq.m. on plan) including dressing of sides and ramming of bottoms, lift upto 1.5 m including getting out the excavated soil and disposal of surplus for foundation	6.00	Cum	0.00	300.000	2124.000	700.000	4956.000	2124.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
12.00	Rubble packing with hard laterite stone under floors including watering ramming and consolidating etc. in pipeline trenches and other foundations complete. Floor	8.97	Cum	0.00	4000.000	42338.400	2200.000	23286.120	23286.120	SAGLANI FURNITURE

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13.00	Providing and laying in position cement concrete 1:2:4 (1 cement : 2 coarse sand: 4 graded granitic or basaltic stone aggregate 40 m nominal size) excluding cost of centering, shuttering and finishing : a All works upto plinth level Floor Surface	4.49	Cum	0.00	9000.000	47683.800	7200.000	38147.040	38147.040	SAGLANI FURNITURE
14.00	Laterite masonry in neatly dressed stones of sizeas specified in cement mortar 1: 5 (1 cement : 5coarse sand) in foundation and basement	3.60	Cum	0.00	8000.000	33984.000	2200.000	9345.600	9345.600	SAGLANI FURNITURE
15.00	20mm cement plaster 1: 3 (1 cement : 3 fine sand) platform top	12.00	Sqm	0.00	800.000	11328.000	2000.000	28320.000	11328.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
16.00	Providing and and laying scratch resistant floor tiles in different sizes of Johnson, Somany, Kajaria (thickness to be specified by the manufacturer) with water absorption less than 0.08% and conforming to IS:15622 of approved make in colours and shades as specified laid on 20 mm thick cement mortar 1:4 (1 Cement : 4 Coarse sand) including grouting the joints with white cement and matching pigment etc., complete 600 x 600 mm light Shades	32.85	Sqm	0.00	1800.000	69773.400	1400.000	54268.200	54268.200	SAGLANI FURNITURE
17.00	Providing and fixing 1st quality ceramic glazed wall tiles (Johnson, Somany, Kajaria)conforming to IS:15622 (thickness to be specified by the manufacture of approved make in all colours, shades except burgundy, bottle green, black of any size as approved by Engineer-in-charge in skirting, risers of steps and dados over 12 mm thick bed of cement mortar 1:3 (1 cement : 3 coarse sand) and jointing with grey cement slurry @3.3kg per sq.m including pointing in white cement mixed with pigment of matching shade complete. C) Wall Ceramic Glazed Tiles : 300 x 600	19.32	Sqm	0.00	1700.000	38755.920	1400.000	31916.640	31916.640	SAGLANI FURNITURE
18.00	Providing and fixing vitreous china wash basin with RS or C.I. brackets painted white, 15 mm C.P. brass pillar taps C.P. brass chain with rubber plug 32 mm C.P. brass waste of pattern, 32 mm diameter M.I. or C.P. brass trap and union complete, including cutting and making good the walls where required. a Flat back wash basin size 630 x 450mm with a p Flat back wash basin size 550 x 400mm with a single 15 mm C.P. brass pillar taps.	1.00	Each	0.00	7000.000	8260.000	8000.000	9440.000	8260.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd

MANAGER FINANCE & ADMIN.
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19.00	Proving and fixing white vitreous china water closet squating (European type w.c. pan) with seat and lid, C.P. brass hinges and rubber buffers 10 lts. High level P.V.C.. flushing cistern (of approved make) with fittings, rack bolts 32 mm diameter P.V.C. telescopic flush pipe with fit tings and clamps 25mm P.V.C.. over flow pipe with specials & mosquito proof coupling of approved municipal design and nylon. chain and pull complete, cutting and making good the walls ad floors where required. a W.C. pan with white plastic seat and lid.	1.00	Each	0.00	15000.000	17700.000	8000.000	9440.000	9440.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
20.00	Providing and fixing Hand Shower (Health Faucet) with 8mm dia, ABS/brass body with double lock 1.00m long Flexible tube (Brass plated stainles steel flexible hose) and wall hook of approved quality confirming to IS standards.	1.00	Each	0.00	1850.000	2183.000	9000.000	10620.000	2183.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
21.00	Providing and fixing NICKEL chrome plated copper alloy Fancy Two Way Bib Cock with single knob and wall flange conforming to IS 8931:1993 15mm nominal bore.	1.00	Each	0.00	1450.000	1711.000	1000.000	1180.000	1180.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
22.00	Fancy wall mixer with 3 IN 1 SYSTEM WITH 115MM long bend pipe for connection to over head shower Jaguar make or equivalent.	1.00	Each	0.00	5700.000	6726.000	4000.000	4720.000	4720.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
23.00	Fancy wall mixer NON TELEPHONIC SHOWER SYSTEM Jaguar make or equivalent.	1.00	Each	0.00	4500.000	5310.000	4000.000	4720.000	4720.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
24.00	Single Towel Rail - Jaquar make 300mm long	1.00	Each	0.00	900.000	1062.000	2000.000	2360.000	1062.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
25.00	Providing & fixing soap dish chromium plated with brackets fixed to wooden cleats with CP brass screw	1.00	Each	0.00	1000.000	1180.000	2000.000	2360.000	1180.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
26.00	Providing and fixing nahani trap of rigid PVC (approved make) for S.W.R. pipes including lubricating etc complete, without door :	1.00	Each	0.00	450.000	531.000	2000.000	2360.000	531.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
27.00	Providing & fixing bevelled edge mirror of superior glass (5mm thk) of approved Quality, shape & size complete with CP brass screws and washers, Cleats, CP studs etc Complete.	1.00	Each	0.00	3500.000	4130.000	4000.000	4720.000	4130.000	Unifab infra projects pvt ltd
28.00	Beds for the cottage King size	1.00	Each	0.00	30000.000	35400.000	20000.000	23600.000	23600.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
29.00	Cupboard	1.00	Each	0.00	15000.000	17700.000	10000.000	11800.000	11800.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
30.00	Study Table	1.00	Each	0.00	5000.000	5900.000	4000.000	4720.000	4720.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
31.00	Plastic Chairs	4.00	Each	0.00	2500.000	11800.000	1000.000	4720.000	4720.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
32.00	Bed side table	2.00	Each	0.00	5000.000	11800.000	3000.000	7080.000	7080.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
33.00	matress king Size	1.00	LS	0.00	15000.000	17700.000	8000.000	9440.000	9440.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
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PANAJI - GOA

34.10	Electrical Fittings	1.00	LS	0.00	55000.000	64900.000	13750.000	16225.000
34.20	Philips Wall Light Fittings with 9 watt LED bulb Indoor (4 Nos) Philips Wall Light Fittings with 9 watt LED bulb outdoor (2 Nos) Swich board (2 Nos) Ceiling Fan (1 Nos) Exaust Fan (1 Nos)	1.00	LS	0.00	25000.000	29500.000	20000.000	23600.000

16225.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE
23600.000	SAGLANI FURNITURE

Total in Figures	1199007.200	1208105.240

Lowest Amount Quoted BY: Unifab infra projects pvt ltd(1199007.200)

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

महाराष्ट्र MAHARASHTRA ◐ 2024 ◐ DB 59257

AGREEMENT

This agreement is made at Goa on the day of 06 August 2025

Between

Action through **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** 1st Lift, 3rd Floor, Junta House, Panji, Goa. (hereinafter called "Client" which expression shall, unless repugnant to the context or meaning thereof be deemed to mean and include its successor, legal representatives and assigns of the First Part.

And

M/s **Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited (**through Authorised Signatory) having Private Limited Company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 (CIN - U20293MH2009PTC195426), its registered office at 06, Bandhu Nagar, Near Zingabai Takli, Koradi Road, Mankapur Nagpur. 440030 Maharashtra (hereinafter called the " Agency" which expression unless repugnant to the context shall mean and include its successors-in-interest assigns etc.) of the Second Part.

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

WHEREAS **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** "Client" is desirous to engage the M/s Unifab

UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PVT. LTD.

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

१) दस्ताचा प्रकार / अनुच्छेद क्रमांक	Tender
२) दस्त नोंदणी करणार आहेत काय?	होय / [illegible]
३) [illegible] दुय्यम निबंधक कर्यालयाचे नाव	[illegible] क्र.
४) मिळकतीचे वर्णन	
५) भोवदला रक्कम	
६) मुद्रांक विकत घेणाऱ्याचे नाव	युनिफेब एम्प्रोजेक्ट प्रा. लि.
७) दुसऱ्या पक्षकाराचे नाव	[illegible]
८) दस्ते असल्यास त्यांचे नाव व पत्ता	
९) मुद्रांक शुल्क रक्कम	500/-
१०) मुद्रांक विक्री नोंद वही अनु.क्रमांक	8812 दिनांक 9/6/25
११) मुद्रांक विकत घेणाऱ्याची सही	
अशोक एम. बोकडे	मुद्रांक विक्रेता ला.क्र. ६/८६ कोड क्र. ४६०१०२५ जिल्हाधिकारी परीसर त. कर्यालय नागपूर(शहर)

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMIN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. COR.
PANAJI - GOA

2. The work should be carried out within 90 days from the date of Agreement and Work Order and the work will be executed strictly as per the terms and conditions.

3. The selected Agency services would be required to supply the items on regular basis to **Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited** on all working days. No separate charges for delivery of goods would be paid by this Office.

4. Order for items shall be placed on requirement basis. Bills in triplicate for the items supplied by the selected Agency should be raised for payment. Payment shall be released after deducting TDS as per Income Tax Rules and any other deductions as per Government rules and payment shall be released only after it is ensured that the items/quantity and quality of items supplied are to the entire satisfaction of this office. If any items are found to be defective, or not of the desired quality etc., the same shall be replaced by the selected Agency immediately for which no extra payment shall be made.

5. If the selected Agency fails to deliver the items (construction of 10 MS prefab Hut Structures as per technical specification including fixtures etc., or replace the defected/ spurious items within the stipulated date & time, liquidated damages will be charged A 5% of the total cost of items ordered on the Bidder and if required, action will be taken against the Firm to Blacklist it and also for forfeiture of its Security Deposit.

6. The Agency shall be bound by the details furnished by him/her to the **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** while submitting the tender or at subsequent stage. Upon selection of the Agency, if at any stage, the documents furnished by him/her is found to be false or the quality of the articles or rates are found of poor quality/different specification, it would be deemed to be a breach of terms of contract, the contract shall be cancelled and performance security shall be stand forfeited.

7. The rate quoted by the selected Agency, and as approved by the **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** shall remain valid throughout the period of contract and the request to increase the rates for any or all items, during the currency of contract, shall not be entertained at any stage.

8. The selected Agency shall not be allowed to transfer, assign, pledge or sub-contract its rights and liabilities under this contract to any other agencies without prior written consent of the **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),**. If it is found that the firm has given sub-contract for supply of above items on the basis of procurement/supply order, the contract shall stand cancelled & the performance security shall stand forfeited.

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PVT. LTD.

Director

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

8. The selected Agency shall not be allowed to transfer, assign, pledge or sub-contract its rights and liabilities under this contract to any other agencies without prior written consent of the **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),**. If it is found that the firm has given sub-contract for supply of above items on the basis of procurement/supply order, the contract shall stand cancelled & the performance security shall stand forfeited.

9. **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** shall not be responsible for any financial loss or other damaged or injury to any item or person deployed/supplied by the successful bidder in the course of their performing the duties to this office in connection with purchase order/supply order for above items.

10. The Goa Forest Development Corporation reserves the right to halt or terminate the work in case of any court case or legal directions, at any stage. In case the work is halted because of such court decision, once the work order is vacated, the contractor shall continue the work and the time frame alloted shall continue from this day. In case the work is terminated indefinitely, Goa Forest development Corporation shall make payment of all completed item of work set in the tender document.

11. The Competent Authority of Forest Department reserves the right to relax/withdraw any of the terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents, if doing so is in the interest of the Forest department.

12. The rate submitted by the Agency should not be higher than the rates at which the items are being supplied by it to other Govt. Institutes /Ministries/Departments/. If subsequently it is found that the firm has supplied above items at higher rates to the Forest Department, Goa State, the excess amount shall be recovered from the Performance Security and/or from the pending bills of the firm along with a penalty of Rs.1000/- on firm on such occasion and shall be doubled on subsequent occasions.

13. The contract shall be valid for a period of three months from the date of award of contract or as indicated in the letter communicating award of contract to the selected firm(s). The contract may be extendable quarter to quarter, subject to maximum period of 6 months, on the same terms and conditions or with some addition/deletion/modification mutually agreed upon by the successful supplier Agency and the **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** Goa.

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

M/S. INFRA PROJECTS PVT. LTD.

Director

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA

Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A

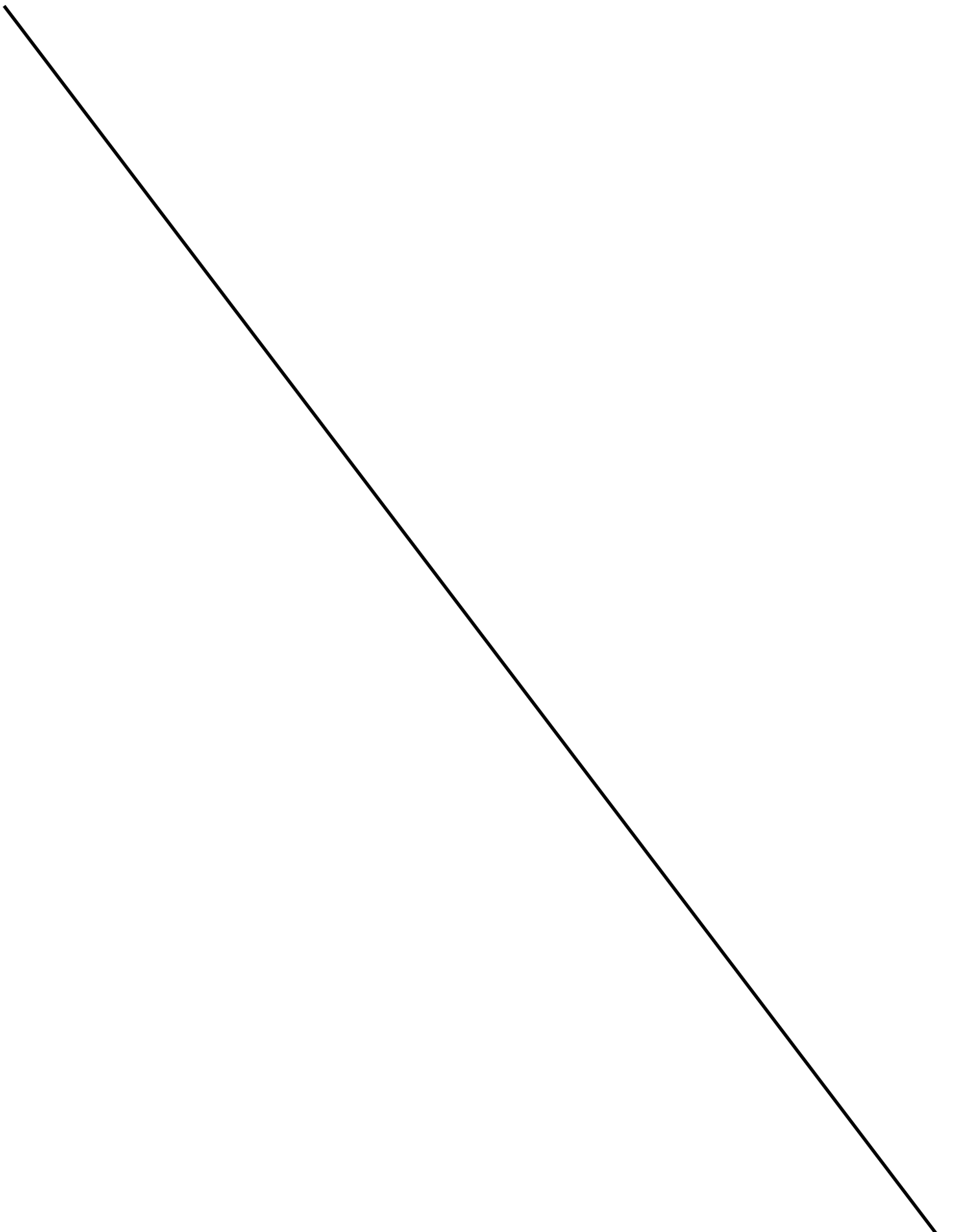
Government of Goa Undertaking), Goa reserves the right to place an order for supply of any items mentioned in the Tender or otherwise , to any other firm(s) in emergency/unavoidable situation i.e. auxiliary incidental to "Dictionary meaning" of stationary.

IN WITNES both the parties here to have caused their respective common seals to be hereunto affixed/ (or have hereunto set their respective hands and seals) the day and year mentioned above in Hyderabad in the presence of the witness: -

For & on behalf of the Unifab Infra Projects Private Limited UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PVT. LTD. Signature Name : Somesh G. Dambhare.	For & on behalf of the **Manager (Fin. & Admn), Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited (A Government of Goa Undertaking),** MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.) GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD. PANAJI - GOA Signature Name :
Seal In presence of Witness:---------- Name:- Address:—	Seal In presence of Witness:---------- Name:- Address:-

This Agreement will take effect from .....and shall be valid for a period of Six Months from the date of commencement of : Award. If the Performance is found satisfactory, the contract would be extendable further for a period as may be agreed mutually (not beyond one year) by both parties.

MANAGER (FINANCE & ADMN.)
GOA FOREST DEVELOP. CORP. LTD.
PANAJI - GOA



ANNEXURE 23

Zauba Corp www.zaubacorp.com (/)

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Company Director Trademark Address

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UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED

As on: 2024-06-20

UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED (CIN: U20293MH2009PTC195426) is a Private company incorporated on 02 Dec 2009. It is classified as Non-government company and is registered at Registrar of Companies, Mumbai. Its authorized share capital is Rs. 5000000.00 and its paid up capital is Rs. 2000000.00.

UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was last held on 30 Dec 2023. and as per records from Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), its balance sheet was last filed on 2023-03-31.**UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED**'s NIC code is 2029 (which is part of its CIN). As per the NIC code, it is inolved in Manufacture of other products of wood, manufacture of articles of cork, straw and plaiting materials.

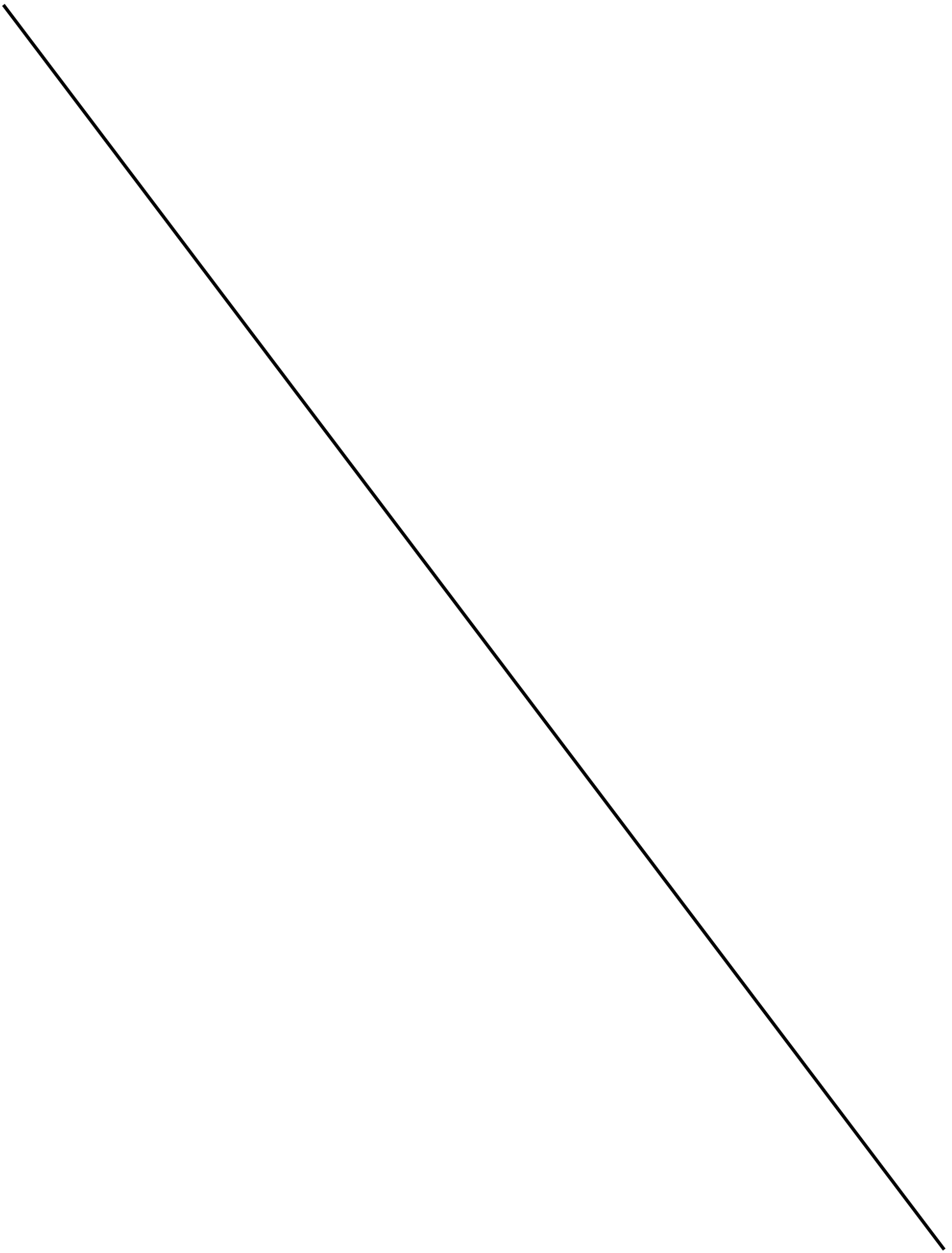
Directors of UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED are PRIYA SOMESH DAMBHARE, and SOMESH GAJANANRAO DAMBHARE.

UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED's Corporate Identification Number (CIN) is U20293MH2009PTC195426 and its registration number is 195426. Users may contact UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED on its Email address - unifabbamboo@gmail.com. Registered address of UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED is PLOT NO 6 KORADI ROAD, BANDHU NAGAR, ZINGABAI TAKLI, , NAGPUR, Maharashtra, India - 440029.

Current status of UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED is - Active.

Basic Information

CIN	U20293MH2009PTC195426 (https://www.zaubacorp.com/UNIFAB-INFRA-PROJECTS-PRIVATE-LIMITED-U20293MH2009PTC195426)
Name	UNIFAB INFRA PROJECTS PRIVATE LIMITED (https://www.zaubacorp.com/UNIFAB-INFRA-PROJECTS-PRIVATE-LIMITED-U20293MH2009PTC195426)
Listed on Stock Exchange	Unlisted
Company Status	Active
ROC	ROC Mumbai
Registration Number	195426
Company Category	Company limited by shares
Company Sub Category	Non-government company
Class of Company	Private
Date of Incorporation	2009-09-02
Age of Company	15 years, 6 months, 11 days
Activity	**NIC Code:** 2029 **NIC Description:** Manufacture of other products of wood, manufacture of articles of cork, straw and plaiting materials
Number of Members	0



LIKELY IMPACT UNDER SECTION 35 OF WILDLIFE (PROTECTION) ACT, 1972

Project Name: Development of Eco-Camps at Collem, North Goa

The instant proposal "Development of eco-camps at Collem, North Goa" submitted by Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC) is to promote, develop and encourage hinterland tourism in State to popularize Goa as one of the preferred destination for Eco-tourism. Through development of Ecotourism at Aranayak, Collem Village the heritage and unique cultural traditions associated with the biodiversity in this area including sacred groves will be showcased. This will further enhance the efforts of Government to promote and preserve the traditional indigenous knowledge, folk history & architecture for posterity. The area proposed for the development of eco camps in Sy.No. 38 of KOLEM Village is 2.096 Ha (20960 Sq.m). Aranyak, Collem Village falls inside Collem Beat and Collem Round of Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park.

Local community will be involved in operation of maintenance of the facilities which in turn will provide "Green Job" opportunities to them at their door step. Moreover, development of such facilities in the hinterland of Goa will provide a significant awareness among one and all through nature education, wilderness experience, guided interpretive excursion etc. which will further supplement the effort to sensitize the public towards protection and conservation of our rich nature and natural wealth.

Aranyak Camp at Collem village in Bhagwan mahavir National Park is an existing functional eco-camping site being created and operated by the Department. 4 swiss tents, 4 open huts, 1 dining area, 1 kitchen, 1 protectiuon office, 1 amphi theatre, 1 elevated sitting gallery, 1 overhead tank, 1 well and a pump house are available at present. Further, one

protection camp is there near the camp. The instant proposal is to create additional facilities and to refurbish the existing facilities through GFDC.

Through development of Ecotourism at proposed site the heritage and unique cultural traditions associated with the biodiversity in this area including sacred groves will be showcased. This will further enhance the efforts of Government to promote and preserve the traditional indigenous knowledge, folk history & architecture for posterity.

The likely impacts and possible mitigation measures of the proposed eco-tourism project/ activity are also listed below;

S.No	Likely Impacts under section 29/35 of WLPA,1972	Mitigation Measures Proposed/ Suggested
1.	Possible disturbance to flora of Aranyak camp Site:	• It is an existing functional eco-camping site • No tree felling and removal of flora is proposed • All the structures will be established with eco-friendly materials and non-permanent nature. • The pathways, common area, eco camps will be established only on stilt without disturbing the ground flora.
2.	Possible disturbance to fauna at Aranyak camp Site and surrounding areas:	• Adequate measures will be taken while developing the project site, assets and project activities considering the safety and movement of wild animals. • Usage of heavy machineries will

		be restricted. • Labour camps will not be permitted inside Protected Area.
3.	Possibility of Human - wildlife conflicts:	• Solar fencing around proposed site is proposed without affecting the animal movement. • Free Movement of Visitors will not be allowed. • Animal Rescuers need to be kept for rescues of reptiles and other wildlife which are found selected location along with first aid facilities. • The proposed activities like Bird Walk, Treks are to be strictly under the supervision of the authorized Nature Guides.
4.	Possible disturbance due to sound and lightings	• Bright lights and loud music shall not be permitted • Sombre lights with movement sensors recommended in outdoors • High Mast flood lights is not recommended
5.	Possible disturbance due to Waste generation.	• 100% waste management, compost pits, water recharge pits etc. are proposed. • Local Panchayat and other stakeholders to be involved in managing both solid and wet waste separately. • No waste and waste water shall be disposed in the WLS. • Single Use Plastics and

		Polythene bags are banned in Protected Areas and the same will be strictly complied.
6.	Vulnerability towards Forest Fire	• Required firefighting equipments to be installed in the required sites • Kindling of Fire as any form like Bonfire etc. shall strictly be not allowed inside the camp. • Smoking is strictly prohibited

As the site is the existing functional eco-camping site and no tree felling is involved for the instant project. Habitat degradation and disturbance to/ removal of any wildlife from the Sanctuary is not involved, as no clearing/ felling of trees are involved.

GFDCL undertake to comply with all rules & regulations applicable as per the Acts / Rules and will take up mitigation measures as suggested by Chief Wildlife Warden, Goa.

If the proposed/ suggested measures are complied, there will be no major considerable impact in the Protected Area.

Asabesti

Dy. Convertor of Forests
Wildlife & Eco-tourism north

Sloth bear attacks Class XI student in Surla

TNN | Oct 6, 2023, 12.28 AM IST

Keri: A Class XI (science) student was attacked by a sloth bear while on her way to attend school on Wednesday morning.
Bhagyashree Pingale, a student of Shri Bhumika Higher Secondary, Poriem, resides with her family inside the forested area of the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary.

Bhagyashree was attacked by a female sloth bear that had two cubs. The girl's grandmother, sister and officials at the forest checkpost rushed to the scene on hearing her cries for help.
They rescued her from another attack.

Bhagyashree sustained injuries while running away from the animal. She could not attend school.

The family of Deu Pingale has already given their consent to the forest department to move away if they are given a rehabilitation package. However, the state government is yet to take any steps. The family's domestic animals have been attacked by tigers on several occasions, and the forest department has paid them compensation.

When contacted, range forest officer Geerish Bailudkar said, "I have sent preliminary information about the incident to the deputy conservator of forests, who will take the necessary steps."

In February last year, Shilpa Gaonkar from Surla was attacked by a sloth bear.

Printed from
THE TIMES OF INDIA

ANNEXURE 24 COLLY

Surla woman suffers wrist injuries in sloth bear attack

TNN | Feb 7, 2022, 04.07 AM IST

Keri: Shilpa Gaonkar, a resident of Surla, in Sattari taluka, was recently attacked by a sloth bear, resulting in injuries to her left wrist.
The incident occurred in the evening when Gaonkar and her husband Sitaram were on their way to their cashew plantation. Sitaram's timely intervention helped save his wife from grievous injuries.

She was later admitted at a Sakhali hospital for treatment.
When contacted by TOI, Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary range forest officer Deepak Tandel said, "I have personally met the victim and assured her of necessary compensation."

The forest department has also informed locals about the presence of sloth bears and tigers in the vicinity of villages in Surla.

This is not the first such incident. In 2016, Rupavati Krishna Vandekar from Maan, a forested village on the Karnataka side of the border, was fatally attacked by a sloth bear while collecting wood for fuel.

Over the last decade, incidents of sloth bears attacking humans have been on the rise in villages on the Karnataka-Goa border, mainly due to habitat loss and degradation.

The incident occurred in the evening when Gaonkar and her husband Sitaram were on their way to their cashew plantation. Sitaram's timely intervention helped save his wife from grievous injuries

Sloth bear mauls man on Goa-K'taka border

Dec 5, 2024, 11.32 PM IST

Keri: A farmer from Maan, on the Goa-Karnataka border, has been grievously injured in a sloth bear attack. Sakharam Mahadev Gaonkar, 63, said a bear mauled him when he was heading to the fields accompanied by his wife.

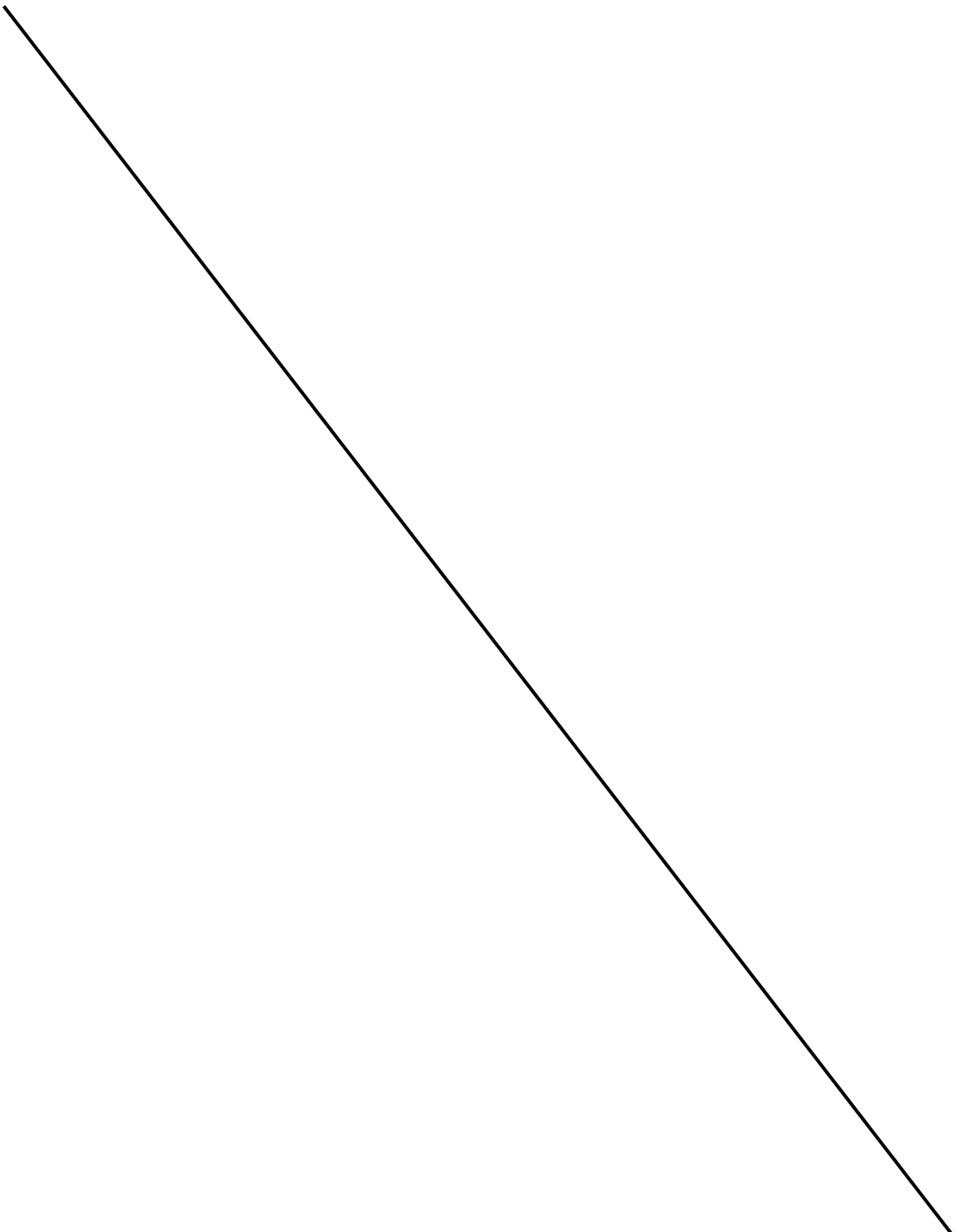
"As we were walking, I saw two sloth bears coming in my direction," Gaonkar said. "I tried to get away, but one of the bears caught hold of my leg, inflicting severe injuries on it."

Gaonkar said he somehow freed himself and took refuge on a tree. After some time, he got down and lay on the ground. Some locals and his wife then took him to a hospital in Belgaum, where he is undergoing treatment. The attack occurred on Sunday.

In April 2016, another Maan resident, Roopvati Krishna Varandekar, was killed by a sloth bear. She was attacked when she was gathering firewood. Conflicts between humans and sloth bears have been rising in and around the area.

At Surla in Sattari, 3km from Maan, two people have been attacked by sloth bears over the past five years. In recent times, sightings of aggressive sloth bears have increased in the area.

Vithal Shelke, a wildlifer working in the Mhadei region, told TOI, "The natural habitat of sloth bears has been degraded by the escalating deforestation. Unless mitigation measures are enforced urgently, such encounters with sloth bears will take a huge toll."



ANNEXURE 25

GOA FOUNDATION

G-8, St Britto's Apartments, Feira Alta, Mapusa 403507 Goa, INDIA
Telephone: +91-9067176274
E-mail: goafoundation@gmail.com *Website:* www.goafoundation.org

6th August 2025

To:
The Managing Director,
Goa Forest Development Corporation Ltd
Junta House, 3rd Floor, Panaji, Goa 403001

Subj: Construction of Aranyak Project at Collem (within Bhagwan Mahaveer National Park/Wildlife Sanctuary)

Dear Sir,

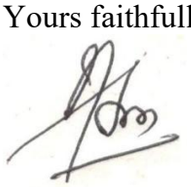
Under the RTI Act, we have obtained documents related to the proposed construction of tourist project at Aranyak camp, inside Collem, which falls within the boundaries of the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park.

In our humble opinion, this project cannot proceed without prior forest clearance under Forest Conservation Act, 1980. Further, it also falls within the to-be-notified core zone of the Tiger Reserve as per the judgment of the Hon'ble High Court dated 24.7.23 which continues to hold the field.

Therefore take notice that any construction of the proposed structures at the Aranyak campsite would be in violation of the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972 and the Forest Conservation Act 1980. Approval of such a proposal would also be in direct conflict with the directions issued by the Bombay High Court vide its judgment dated 24.7.23.

It is therefore hoped that better sense will prevail and that the construction of the project will be abandoned. I do look forward to a response from you in the matter.

Yours faithfully,



Dr Claude Alvares
Director